MARVEL®

THE PITT

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THE PITT

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Scanned by Toker The Kid

My name is Nelson Kohler, and for the past year and a half I have been a *ghost*.

It all began two summers ago with what the media has dubbed the *White Event*. For about five seconds the sky went brilliant white all over the world. Scientists are still debating what caused it.

Whatever it was, extraordinary things began occurring in its immediate aftermath . . .

I was driving my automobile at the time. Blinded by the sudden light in the sky, I lost control of my car, crashed, and died a few hours later.

That is, my *physical form* died. My consciousness, affected by what I assume was the energy of the White Event, survived. It felt strange not to have a body, so I *imagined* myself to have one.

I've been doing it ever since. The only problem with having an imaginary body is that no one else can see me or touch me or even *hear* me. On the other hand, I have no physical limitations, and I can practically do anything I want.

I was hardly the only one affected by whatever it was unleashed by the White Event. In the days and weeks and months since, people all over the world have been developing strange paranormal forms and abilities.

I should know. For I somehow *sense* people who are in the process of becoming paranormal.

It's more than just a sensation. It's a *compulsion*. When I get that buzzing sensation in the pit of my imaginary stomach, I *have* to go and find out what's causing it. I don't know why. Maybe it's purely psychological. Maybe I'm drawn to it because it's the only thing on Earth I *can* feel.

I guess I'm like a *moth*, compelled to flit from flame to flame.

Well over a year ago, I lost count of the number of transformations I have observed. Surely it is in the hundreds by now, perhaps *thousands*.

Today, for the first time since my ethereal life began, I feel something *different* — a sensation more intense than the pain of my own *death*.

This is not the birth-cry of a lone human being in the throes of impending paranormalcy. This is more like the rape-scream of the human race itself just before the *White Event* visited its fury upon it.

Can the Great Unexplained Phenomenon be about to happen again?

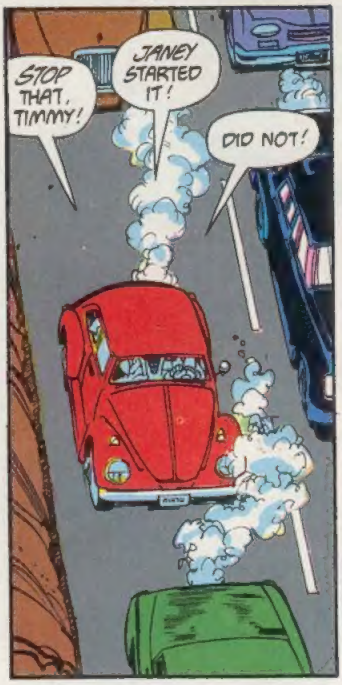
I don't know. What I *do* know is that I must seek out the source of the disturbance I feel, and be there when it bursts into being.

For I am . . . the *Witness*.

DECEMBER 22, 1987, 4:10 P.M. E.S.T., SOMEWHERE IN OHIO...
AGONY... MAKING MY PHANTOM BODY SPASM...
GOT TO BLOCK IT OUT OR I WON'T BE ABLE TO DO MORE THAN WRITHE IN THE WIND--!
IT'S SO LOUD-- INTENSE... LIKE STANDING IN THE CENTER OF A MILLION PEOPLE GARGLING SHARDS OF GLASS--!

I MUST TRAVERSE THE SKY FASTER THAN I'VE EVER GONE BEFORE--
--SOMEHOW IT FEELS LIKE THERE IS NOT MUCH TIME LEFT BEFORE... IT HAPPENS, WHATEVER IT IS!

WHERE AM I HEADING?
A CITY IN THE DISTANCE... WHICH ONE? I COULD SWOOP LOWER, READ A ROAD SIGN.
NO. NO TIME. BESIDES, WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE WHAT CITY'S BELOW?


STOP THAT, TIMMY!
JANEY STARTED IT!
DID NOT!

YOUR FATHER'S HAVING A HARD ENOUGH TIME DRIVING THROUGH THIS TRAFFIC WITHOUT YOU KIDS ADDING TO IT.
SORRY, DAD.
SURE WISH MR. DILLER HAD LET ME GO HOME SOONER. I KNEW TRAFFIC WOULD BE THIS BAD IF WE LEFT SO LATE.

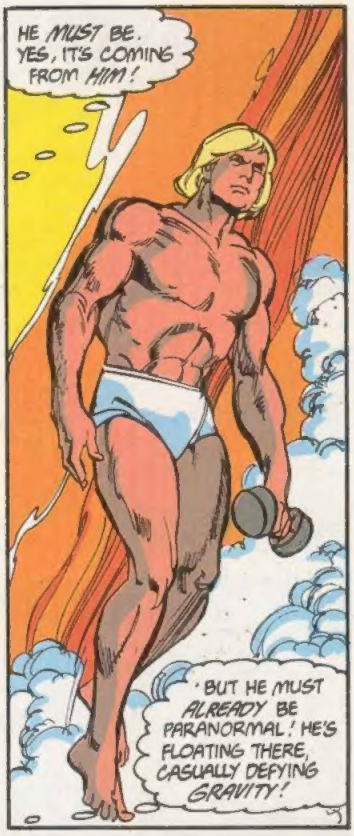
AT LEAST HE GAVE YOU WEDNESDAY OFF, DEAR.
YEAH. STILL, DOUBT WE'LL GET TO GRANDMA'S HOUSE TILL WAY PAST THE KIDS' BEDTIME.
THE PAIN IS GETTING LOUDER-- ITS SOURCE IS DEFINITELY SOMEWHERE IN THAT CITY AHEAD, WHATEVER IT IS.

HO-HO-HO! MERRY CHRISTMAS!
"PITTSBURGH SAVINGS AND LOAN." I MUST BE IN PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA.
BUT WHERE OH WHERE IS MY AGONY COMING FROM? SO INTENSE HERE I CAN'T QUITE PINPOINT IT.
WRIGHT INC
CROSS

I...I FEEL THE SOURCE OF THE DISTURBANCE MOVING...
...MOVING UPWARDS, INTO THE SKY...

YES, THAT MAKES SENSE. THAT'S WHERE THE WHITE EVENT HAPPENED, AFTER ALL:
NNGH! THE PAIN--HURTS TO EVEN THINK...

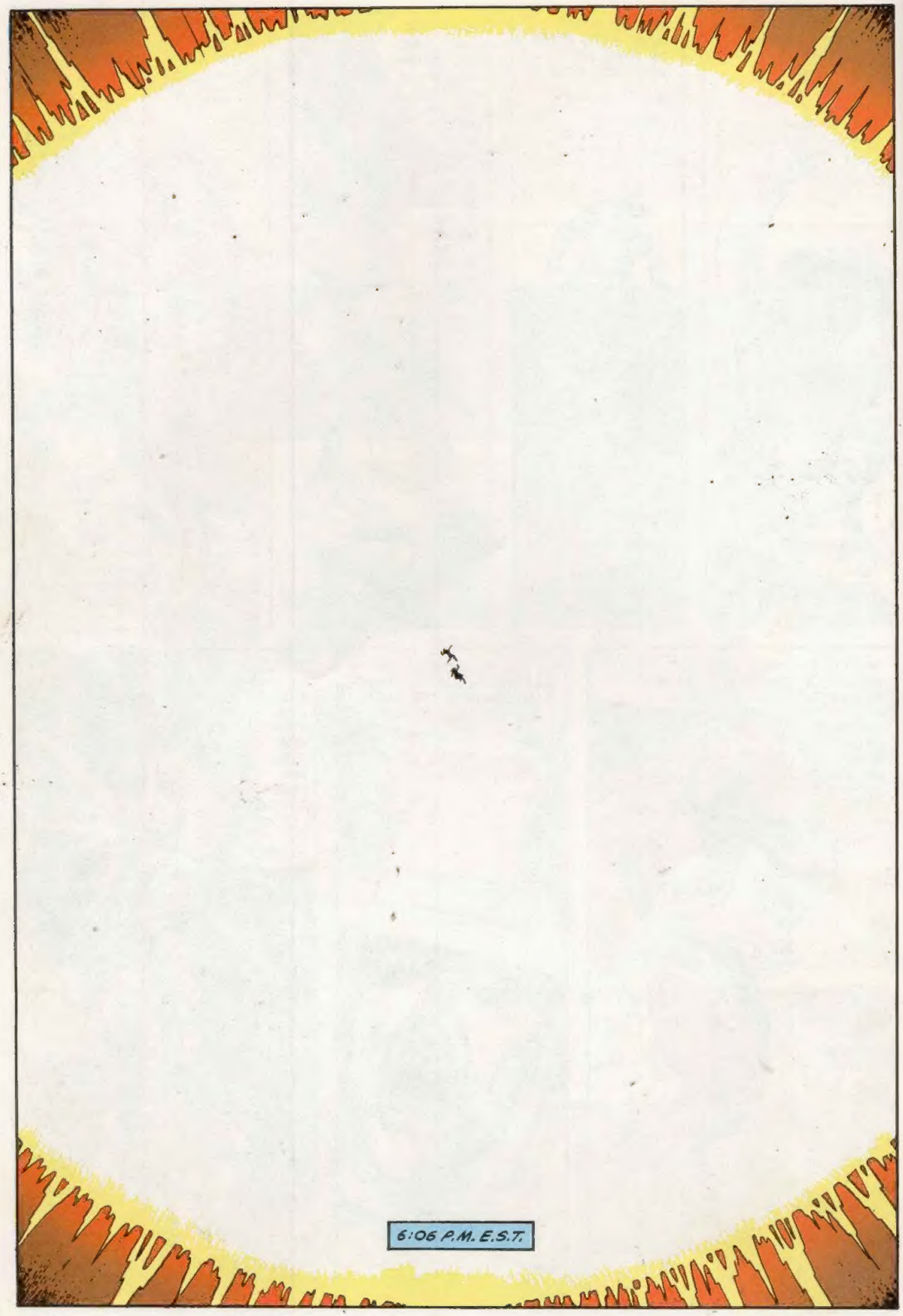
WHAT--? A MAN. A TALL BLOND MAN FLYING--IN NOTHING BUT HIS UNDER-WEAR!
IS HE--CAN HE BE THE SOURCE OF THE PSYCHIC TRAUMA I FEEL?

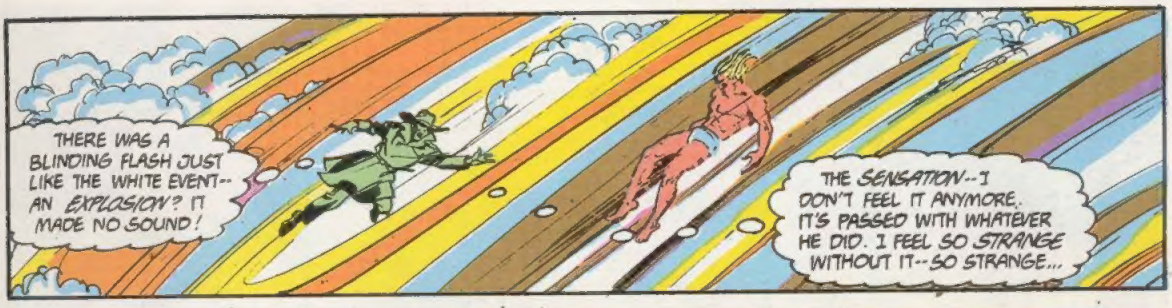

HE MUST BE. YES, IT'S COMING FROM HIM!
BUT HE MUST ALREADY BE PARANORMAL! HE'S FLOATING THERE, CASUALLY DEFYING GRAVITY!

WHAT IS THAT HE IS HOLDING? A METAL WEIGHT OF SOME SORT? HE LOOKS LIKE HE'S ABOUT TO SLAP IT WITH--!
HIS HAND. MY GOD, THE POWER--IT'S HIS HAND!
OR SOMETHING IN AND AROUND IT--!

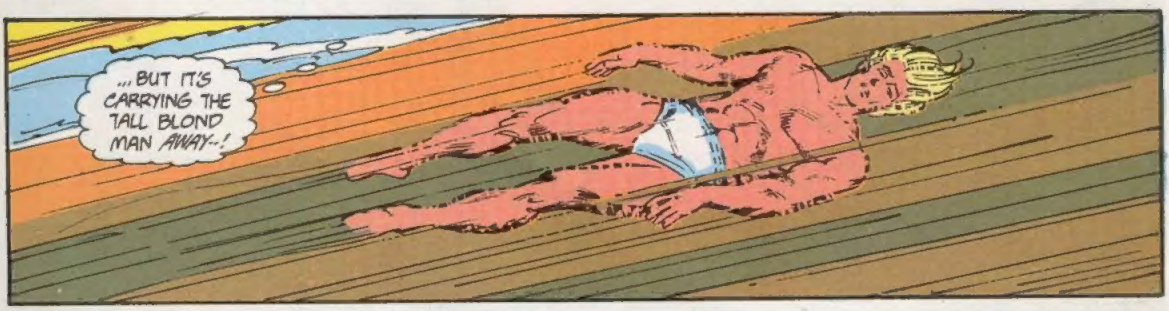
THE PAIN IS...UNBEARABLE--WHATEVER HE'S ABOUT TO DO IS CAUSING IT--! HE MUST BE WARNED--STOPPED--!
NOOOOOOOO!

I'M TOO LATE!
CURSE THIS PHANTOM BODY! THERE WAS NEVER ANYTHING I COULD DO ANYWAY!
HE'S PRESSED HIS HAND TO THAT METAL WEIGHT--IT'S GLOWING--
NOW WHAT?!?


6:06 P.M. E.S.T.


THERE WAS A BLINDING FLASH JUST LIKE THE WHITE EVENT-- AN EXPLOSION? IT MADE NO SOUND!
THE SENSATION--I DON'T FEEL IT ANYMORE. IT'S PASSED WITH WHATEVER HE DID. I FEEL SO STRANGE WITHOUT IT--SO STRANGE...

NOW WAIT--I DO HEAR A SOUND! LIKE THE HOWL OF THE WIND--
YES--WIND--! A TORNADO--ENGULFING US--!
PASSING THROUGH ME...


...BUT IT'S CARRYING THE TALL BLOND MAN AWAY--!

SHOULD I TRY TO CATCH UP TO HIM? AFTER THE FLASH, HE SLUMPED OVER--AS IF ALL OF THE LIFE HAD LEFT HIM. IS THERE ANY POINT CHASING A DEAD MAN?
NO--I WANT TO SEE THE EFFECTS OF THE EXPLOSION! COULD IT HAVE BEEN NUCLEAR? I DIDN'T SEE A MUSHROOM CLOUD--

--BUT THEN AGAIN WHAT DOES A MUSHROOM CLOUD LOOK LIKE FROM INSIDE?
GETTING HARDER AND HARDER TO SEE. WINDS ARE INCREDIBLE.
HAVE TO--HAVE TO FIND MY WAY OUT--OUT OF THE VORTEX!

GOOD LORD--WHAT AM I LOOKING AT?

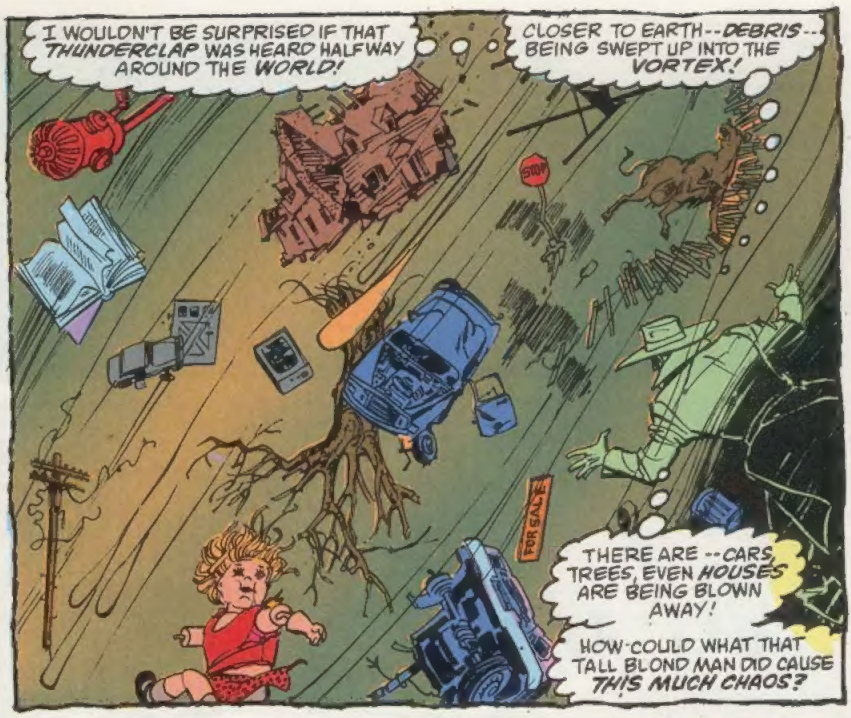
THE TORNADO IS TREMENDOUS--REACHING UP TO THE OUTER EDGE OF EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE!

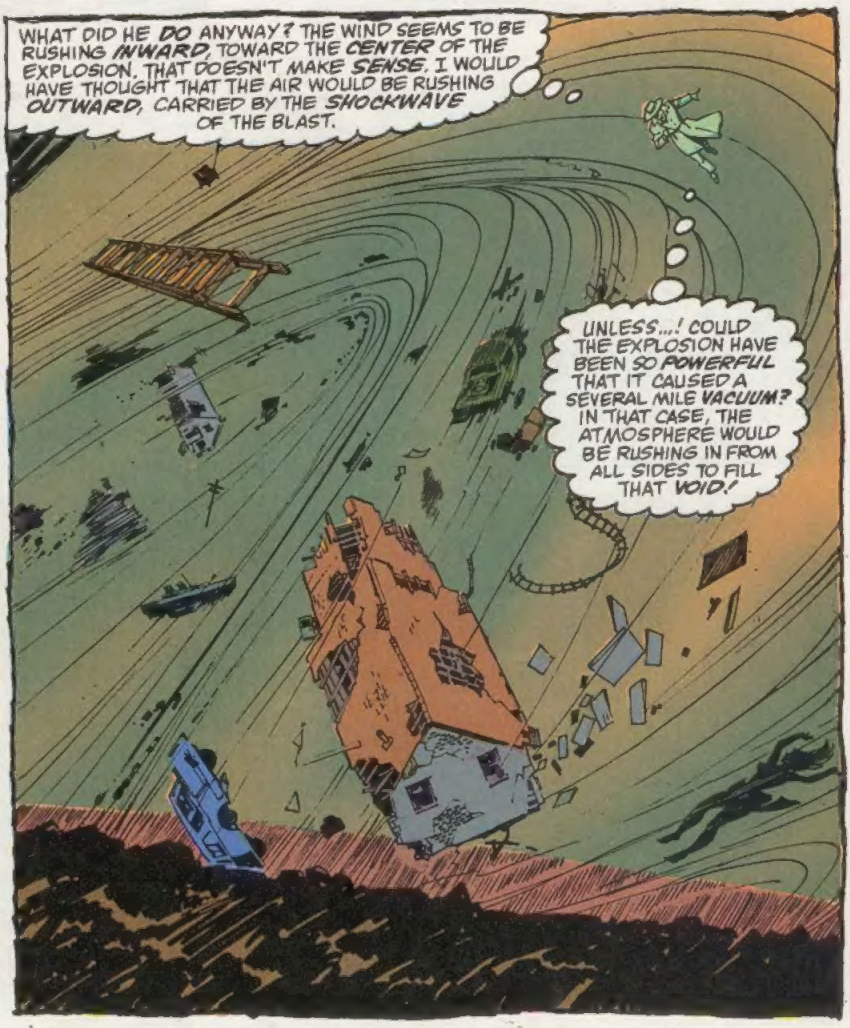
AND THE CITY BELOW--PITTSBURGH--SO DARK--ALL THE LIGHTS OUT--! I CAN'T TELL WHAT'S HAPPENED TO IT!

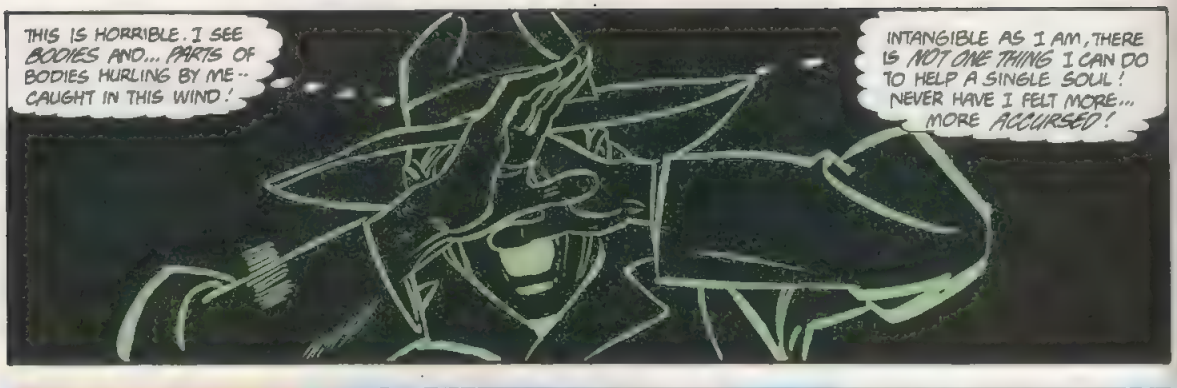
WHAT KIND OF PARANORMAL WAS THAT MAN--TO BE ABLE TO CAUSE A STORM LIKE THIS?!?

I'VE GOT TO GET CLOSER--!

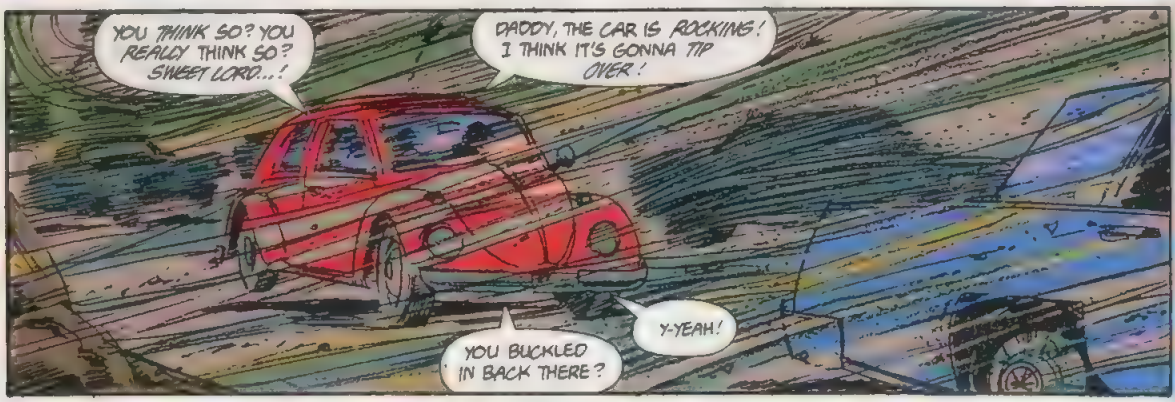
KKRAKKOOM!
WHAT WAS THAT NOISE?!? LIGHTNING? I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH AN ENORMOUS STATIC DISCHARGE!

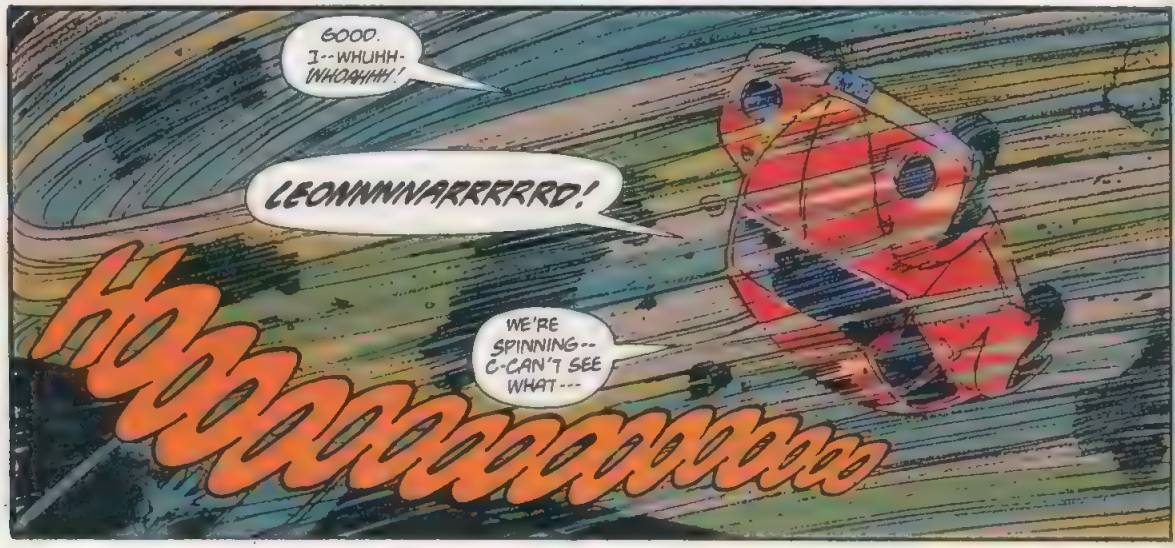

I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF THAT THUNDERCLAP WAS HEARD HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD!
CLOSER TO EARTH--DEBRIS--BEING SWEPT UP INTO THE VORTEX!
STOP
FOR SALE
THERE ARE --CARS, TREES, EVEN HOUSES ARE BEING BLOWN AWAY!
HOW COULD WHAT THAT TALL BLOND MAN DID CAUSE THIS MUCH CHAOS?

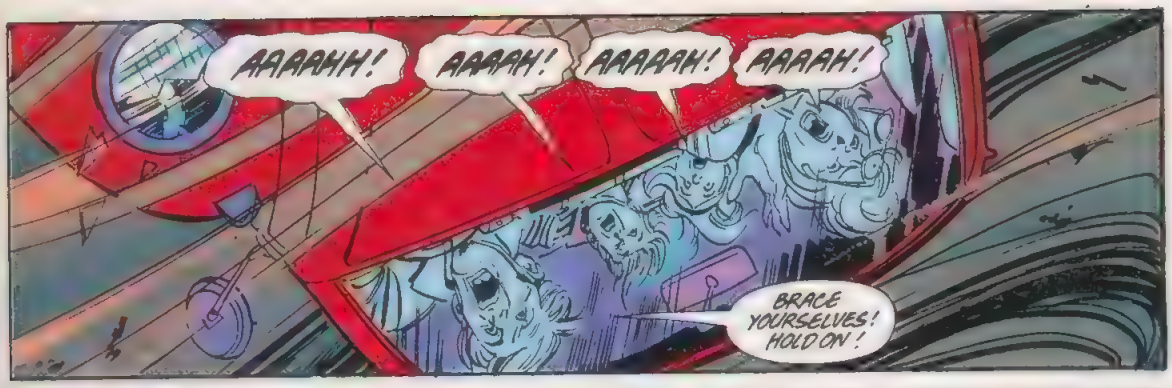

WHAT DID HE DO ANYWAY? THE WIND SEEMS TO BE RUSHING INWARD, TOWARD THE CENTER OF THE EXPLOSION. THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT THE AIR WOULD BE RUSHING OUTWARD, CARRIED BY THE SHOCKWAVE OF THE BLAST.
UNLESS...! COULD THE EXPLOSION HAVE BEEN SO POWERFUL THAT IT CAUSED A SEVERAL MILE VACUUM? IN THAT CASE, THE ATMOSPHERE WOULD BE RUSHING IN FROM ALL SIDES TO FILL THAT VOID!


THIS IS HORRIBLE. I SEE BODIES AND... PARTS OF BODIES HURLING BY ME-- CAUGHT IN THIS WIND!
INTANGIBLE AS I AM, THERE IS NOT ONE THING I CAN DO TO HELP A SINGLE SOUL! NEVER HAVE I FELT MORE... MORE ACCURSED!

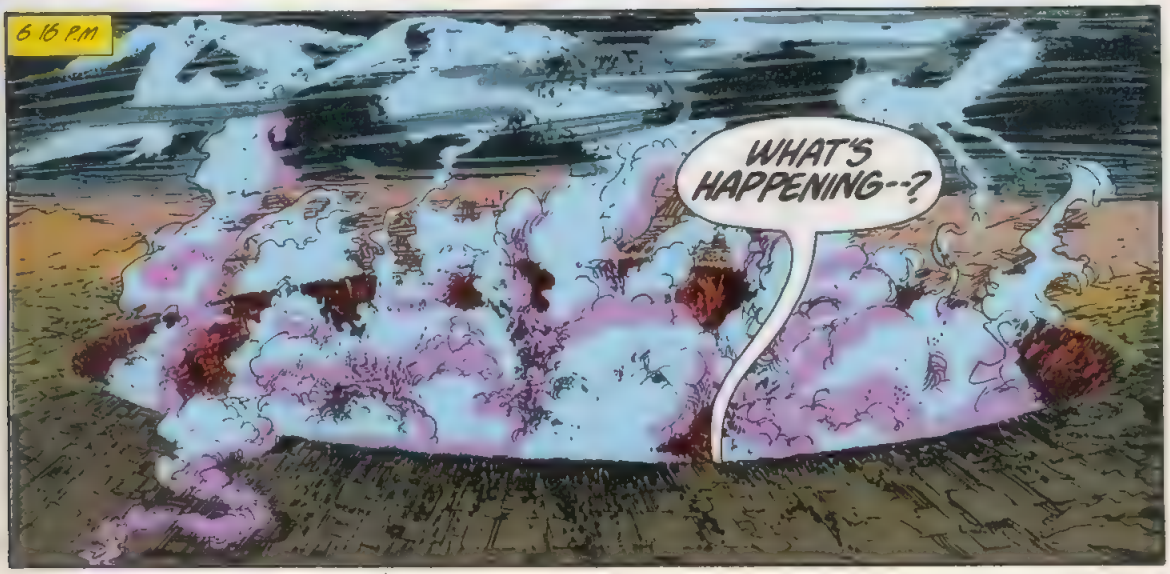
6:08 P.M., 26 MILES AWAY...
LEONARD--WH-WHAT'S HAPPENING? THAT BLINDING LIGHT, THAT EXPLOSION--NOW THIS WIND! WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?
MOMMY, I'M SCARED!
I-I DON'T KNOW, MARGE! MAYBE--MAYBE THOSE DANGED RUSSKIES DROPPED THE BIG ONE!

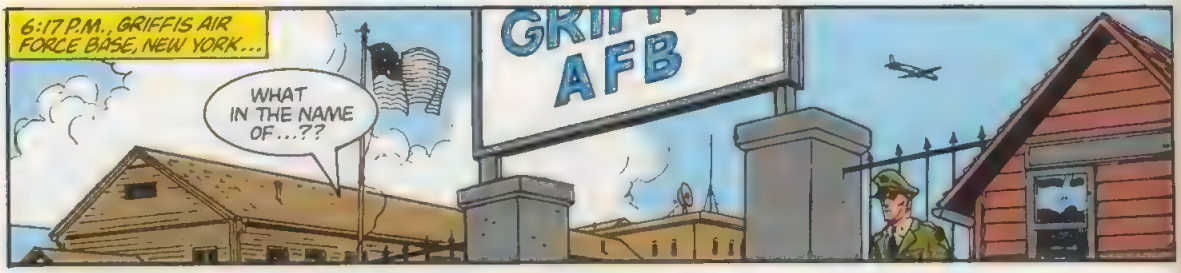

YOU THINK SO? YOU REALLY THINK SO? SWEET LORD...!
DADDY, THE CAR IS ROCKING! I THINK IT'S GONNA TIP OVER!
YOU BUCKLED IN BACK THERE?
Y-YEAH!


GOOD. I--WHUHH-WHOAHH!
LEONNNNARRRRRD!
WE'RE SPINNING-- C-CAN'T SEE WHAT---


AAAAAHH!
AAAAH!
AAAAAH!
AAAAH!
BRACE YOURSELVES! HOLD ON!

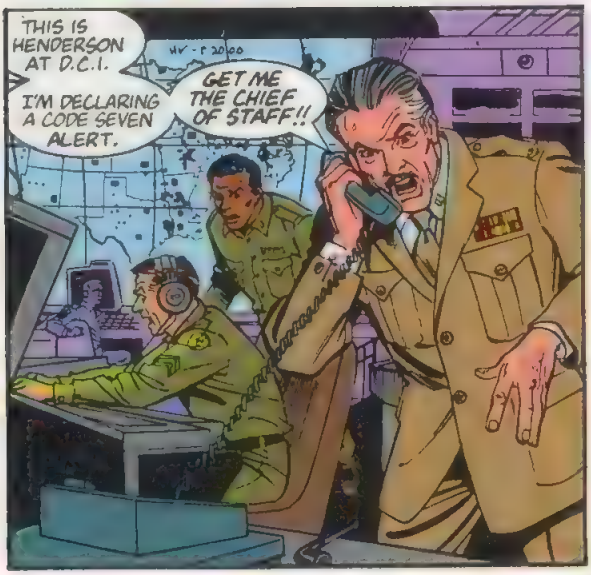
FOR GOD'S SAKE-- HOLD ON!
FEELS--FEELS LIKE WE'RE FALLING!
OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN--!

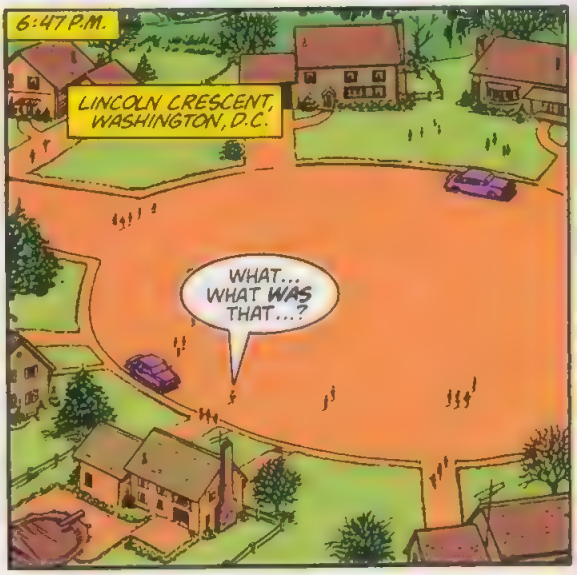

6:16 P.M.
WHAT'S HAPPENING--?


6:17 P.M., GRIFFIS AIR FORCE BASE, NEW YORK...
GRIFFIS AFB
WHAT IN THE NAME OF...??

WHATCHA GOT, SMITTY?
YOU TELL ME, GUS.
I AIN'T NEVER SEEN A SIGNAL LIKE THIS!
JONES

IF I'M READIN' THIS RIGHT...
PITTSBURGH JUST TURNED INTO A CRATER--FIFTY MILES ACROSS!
WHAT?!?
GREAT GODAMIGHTY!
HE'S RIGHT!! THAT'S THE ONLY WAY TO INTERPRET THAT IMAGE!


THIS IS HENDERSON AT D.C.I.
I'M DECLARING A CODE SEVEN ALERT.
GET ME THE CHIEF OF STAFF!!


6:47 P.M.
LINCOLN CRESCENT, WASHINGTON, D.C.
WHAT... WHAT WAS THAT...?

IT SOUNDED LIKE THUNDER...

...BUT I'VE NEVER HEARD THUNDER SO... SO STRANGE.

IT WAS ALMOST MORE LIKE AN EARTH-QUAKE. LIKE YOU FELT IT MORE THAN HEARD IT.

MAC...

WHAT WAS IT? YOU'RE WITH SPECIAL FORCES...YOU SHOULD KNOW...

I'M...NOT SURE, CAROL HONEY...

IT FELT LIKE SOMETHING BIG GOING OFF, PRETTY CLOSE BY.

BUT A NUKE AS BIG AS THAT WOULD FILL THE SKY WITH LIGHT, WITH SOUND, WITH WIND...

HEY!

WHAT'S THAT NOISE...THAT WIND...

IS THAT...

NO...

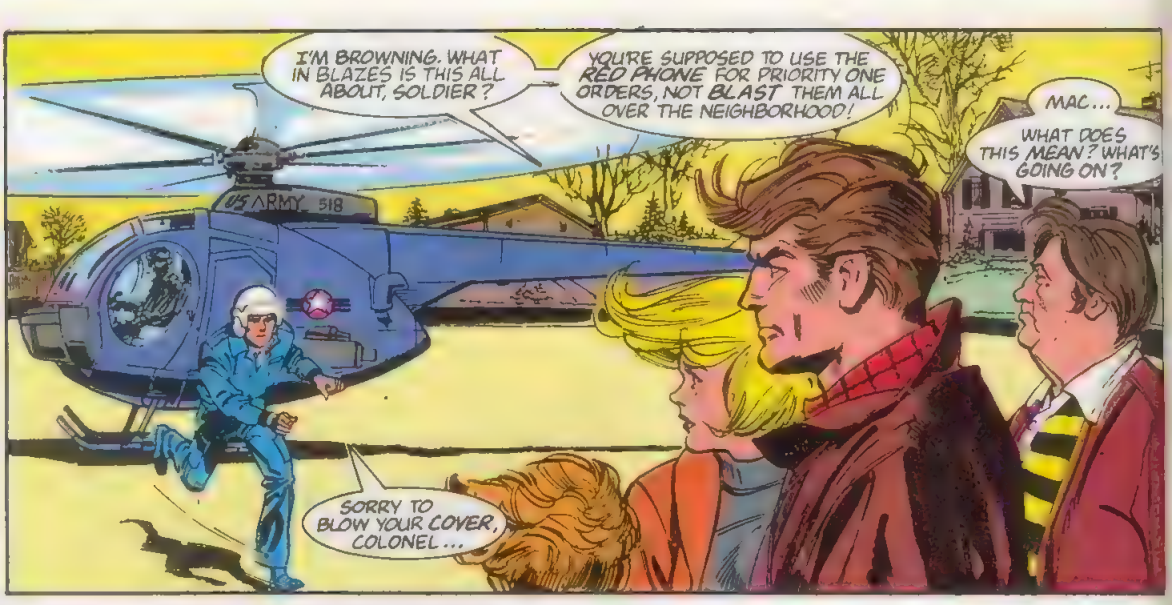
MAC...!

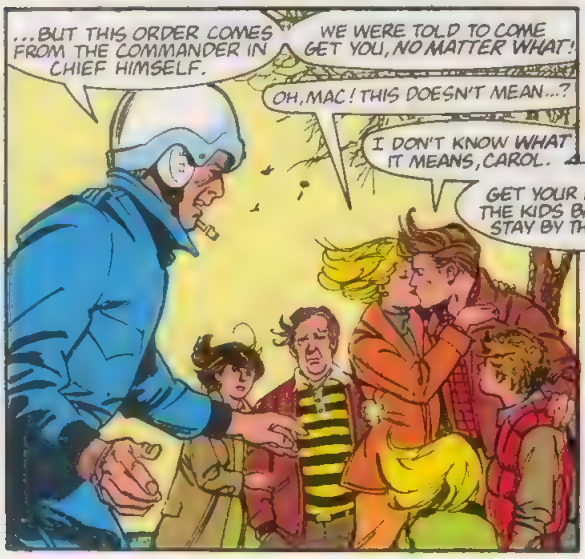
6:51 P.M.

COLONEL BROWNING...

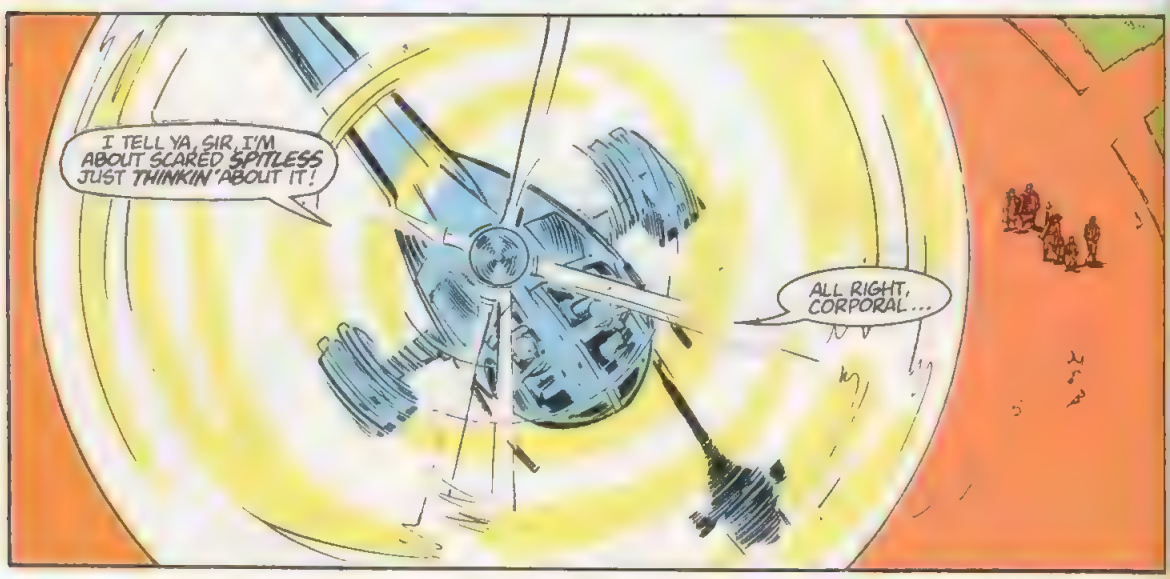
COLONEL MacINTYRE BROWNING, PLEASE SHOW YOURSELF.

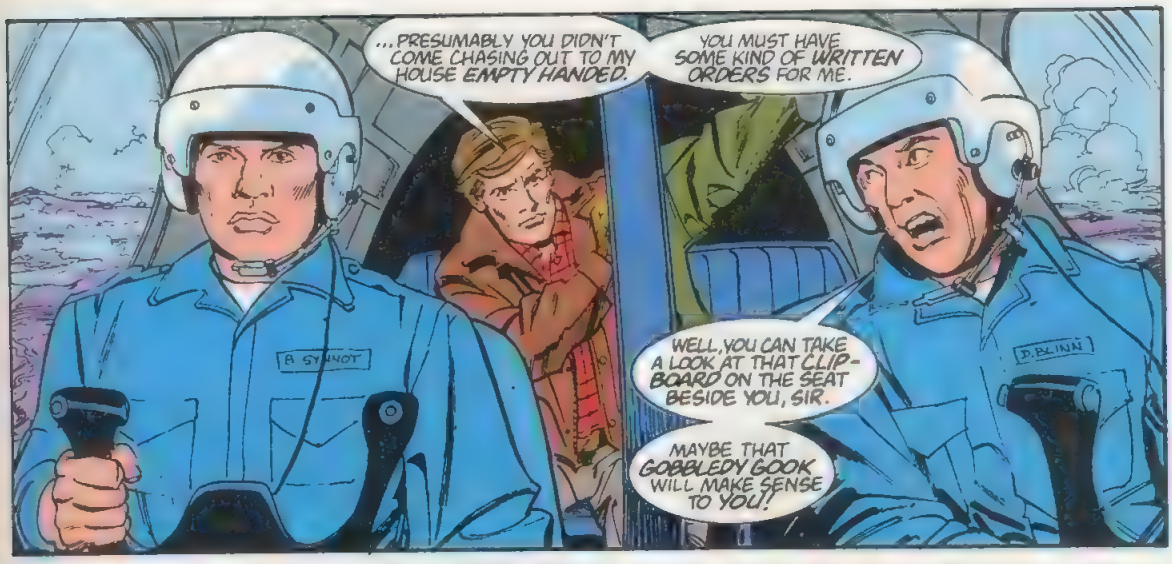
THIS IS A PRIORITY ONE COMMAND.

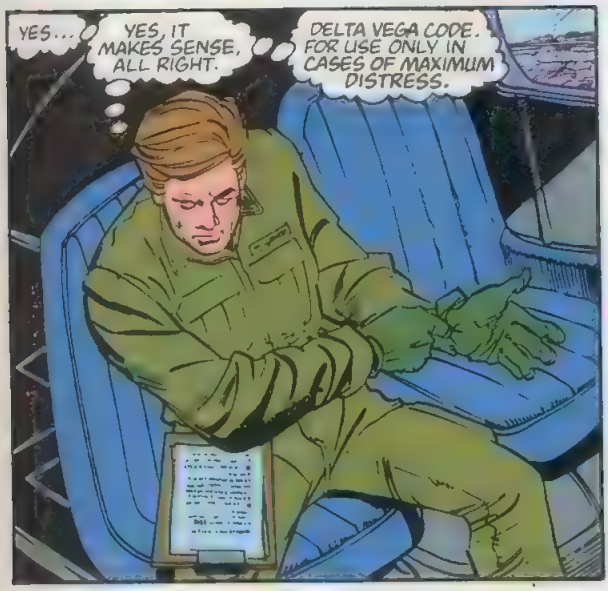

I'M BROWNING. WHAT IN BLAZES IS THIS ALL ABOUT, SOLDIER?
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO USE THE RED PHONE FOR PRIORITY ONE ORDERS, NOT BLAST THEM ALL OVER THE NEIGHBORHOOD!
MAC...
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? WHAT'S GOING ON?
US ARMY 518
SORRY TO BLOW YOUR COVER, COLONEL...


...BUT THIS ORDER COMES FROM THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF HIMSELF.
WE WERE TOLD TO COME GET YOU, NO MATTER WHAT!
OH, MAC! THIS DOESN'T MEAN...?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS, CAROL.
GET YOUR FOLKS AND THE KIDS BACK INSIDE. STAY BY THE PHONE...

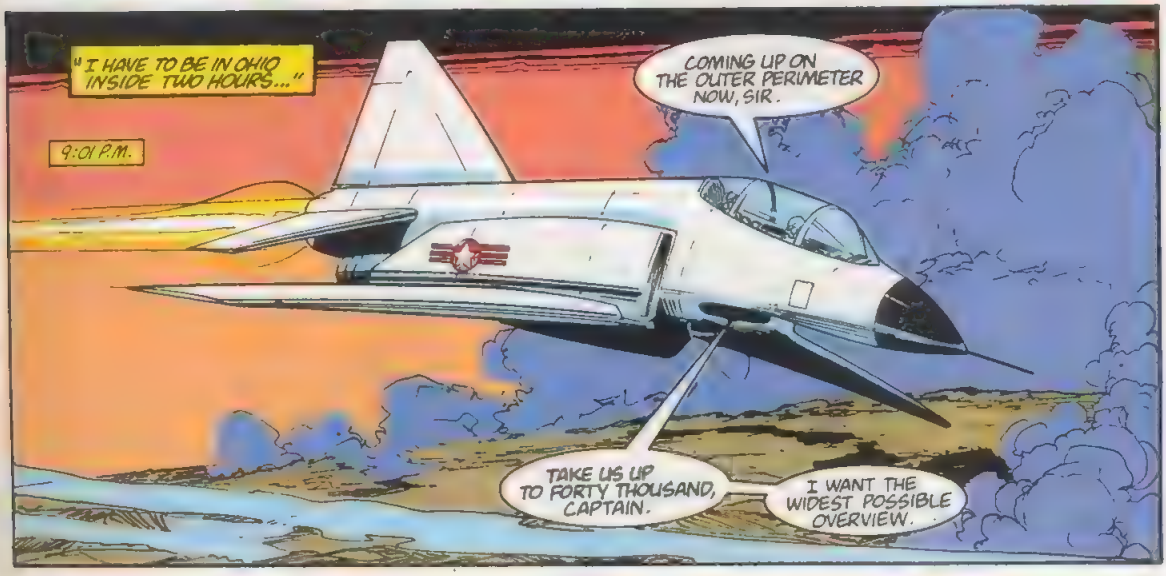
...IF I CAN CALL YOU WHEN I KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING, I WILL.
NOW, CORPORAL, YOU'D BETTER START TELLING ME WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!
I WISH I COULD, COLONEL.
I AIN'T NEVER HAD TO DELIVER A PRIORITY ONE COMMAND.


I TELL YA, SIR, I'M ABOUT SCARED SPITLESS JUST THINKIN' ABOUT IT!
ALL RIGHT, CORPORAL...


...PRESUMABLY YOU DIDN'T COME CHASING OUT TO MY HOUSE EMPTY HANDED.
YOU MUST HAVE SOME KIND OF WRITTEN ORDERS FOR ME.
WELL, YOU CAN TAKE A LOOK AT THAT CLIP-BOARD ON THE SEAT BESIDE YOU, SIR.
MAYBE THAT GOBBLEDY GOOK WILL MAKE SENSE TO YOU!
B. SYMNOT
D. BLINN


YES...
YES, IT MAKES SENSE, ALL RIGHT.
DELTA VEGA CODE. FOR USE ONLY IN CASES OF MAXIMUM DISTRESS.

LIKE IF THE RUSSIANS HAVE NUKED NEW YORK...
ALL RIGHT, CORPORAL...
IF THIS INFORMATION IS ACCURATE, I'M ALREADY LATE FOR THE PARTY.
LET'S SEE WHAT THIS BABY CAN DO.


"I HAVE TO BE IN OHIO INSIDE TWO HOURS..."
9:01 P.M.
COMING UP ON THE OUTER PERIMETER NOW, SIR.
TAKE US UP TO FORTY THOUSAND, CAPTAIN.
I WANT THE WIDEST POSSIBLE OVERVIEW.

YESSIR.

BUT...SIR, I GOT THE GEIGER COUNTER RUNNIN'... ALL I GET IS NORMAL BACKGROUND NOISE.

SHOULDN'T THERE BE...?

DON'T ASK QUESTIONS IN A VACUUM, CAPTAIN.

ALL WE KNOW RIGHT NOW IS THAT THERE HAS NEVER BEEN AN EFFECT LIKE THIS ANYWHERE ON EARTH BEFORE.

WE DON'T HAVE THE LEAST IDEA WHAT TO EXPECT.

BUT, WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S SOMEWHERE UNDERNEATH ALL THAT!

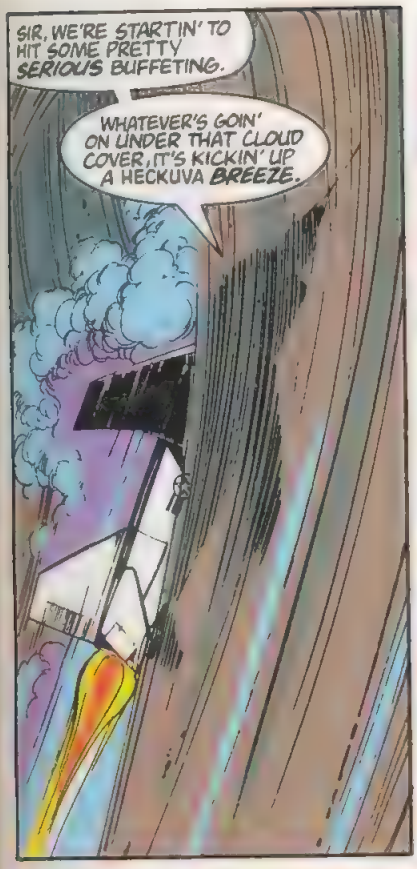
I'M GOING TO TRY TO RAISE A GROUND STATION.

HELLO, PITTSBURGH. THIS IS COLONEL MACINTYRE BROWNING CALLING ANYONE IN THE PITTSBURGH AREA.

DO YOU COPY, PITTSBURGH?

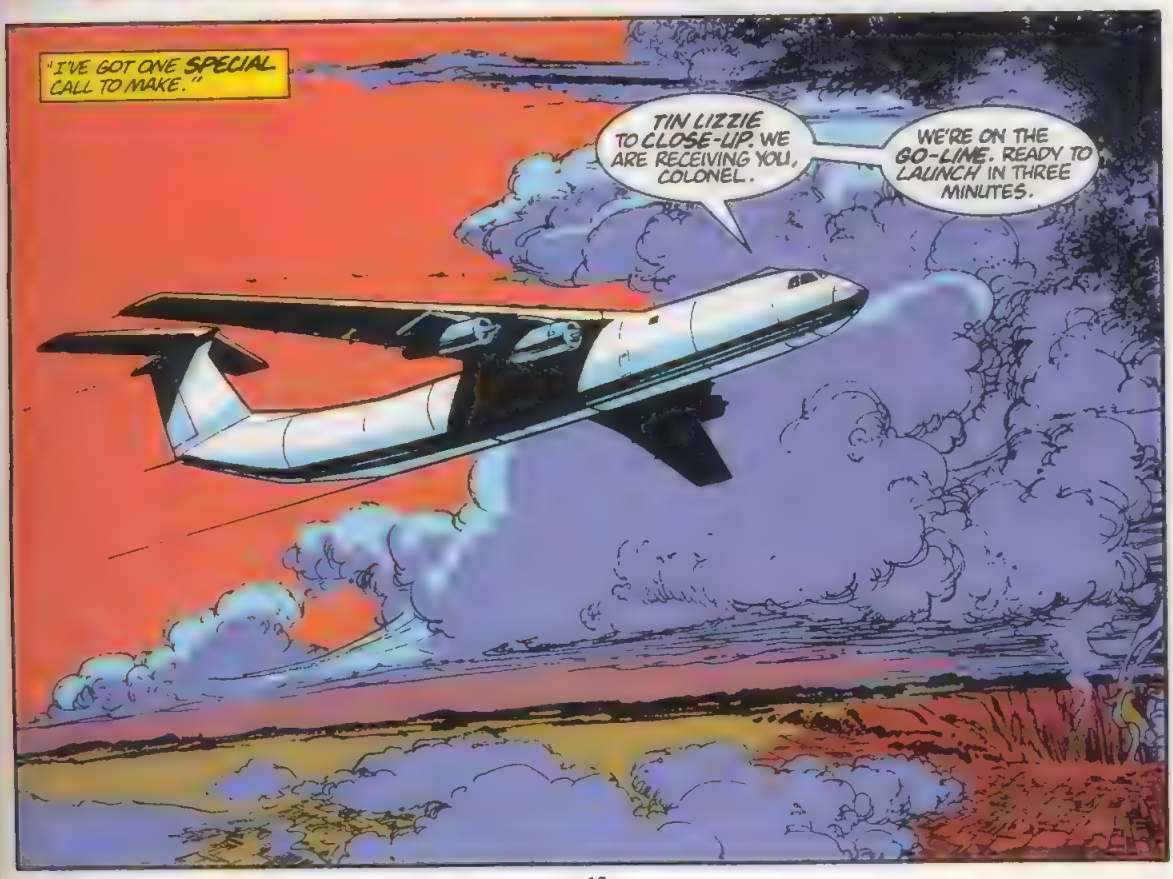
IS ANYONE RECEIVING ME?

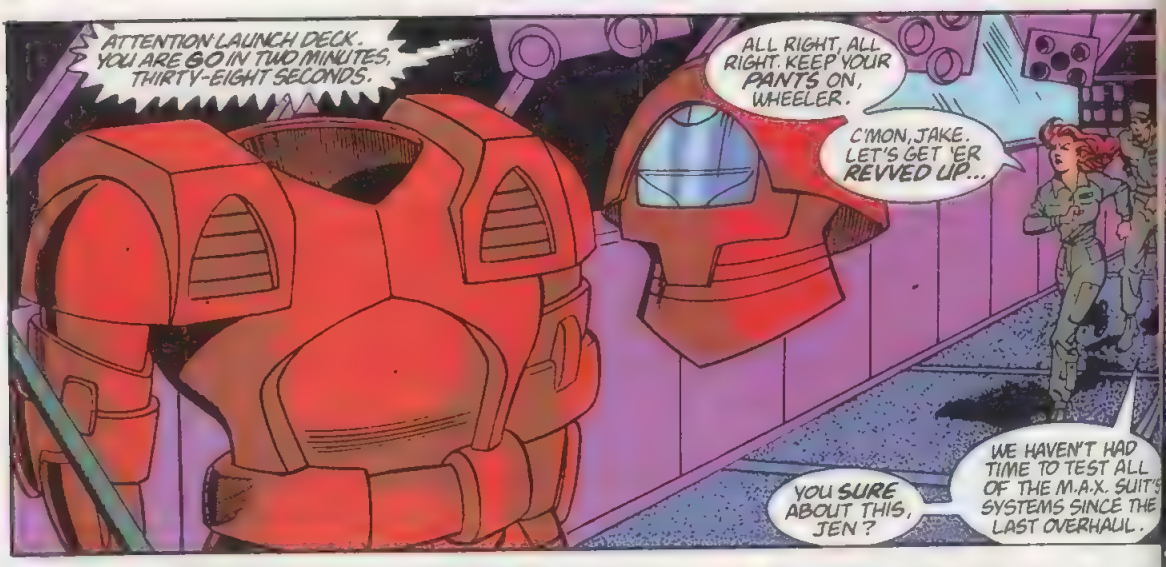
ANYONE?

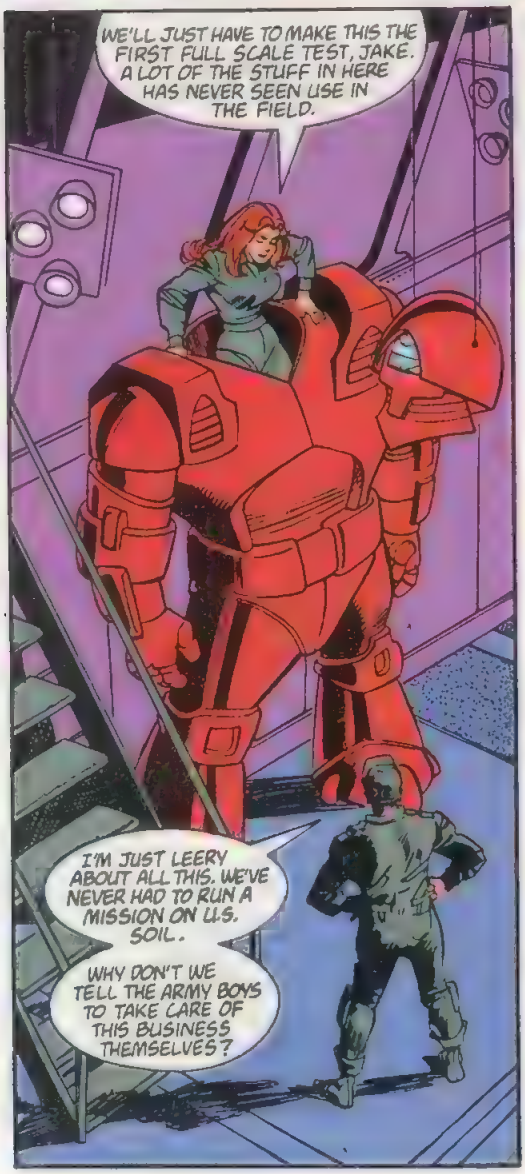

SIR, WE'RE STARTIN' TO HIT SOME PRETTY SERIOUS BUFFETING.
WHATEVER'S GOIN' ON UNDER THAT CLOUD COVER, IT'S KICKIN' UP A HECKUVA BREEZE.

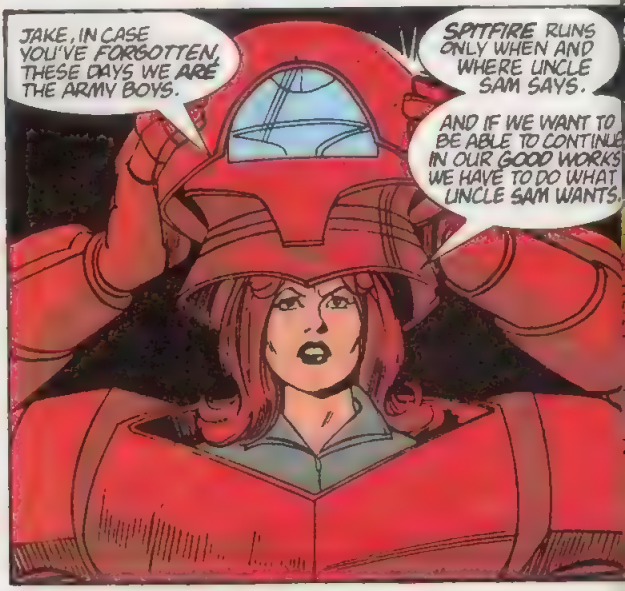
ALL RIGHT...
PULL BACK TO THE PERIMETER. I WANT TO RUN A FEW MORE PASSES AT THIS MESS...

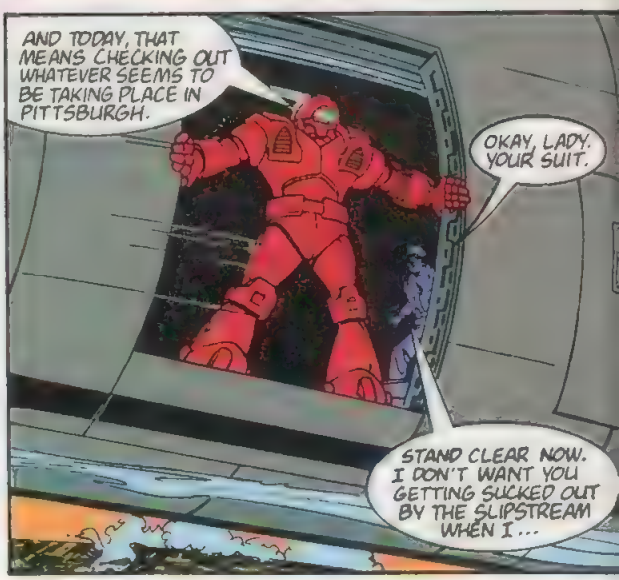
THEN WE'RE GOING TO NEED TO HAUL IT BACK TO OPERATIONS AND START LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR SOME SERIOUS MANEUVERING.
BUT RIGHT NOW...


"I'VE GOT ONE SPECIAL CALL TO MAKE."
TIN LIZZIE TO CLOSE-UP. WE ARE RECEIVING YOU, COLONEL.
WE'RE ON THE GO-LINE. READY TO LAUNCH IN THREE MINUTES.


ATTENTION LAUNCH DECK. YOU ARE GO IN TWO MINUTES, THIRTY-EIGHT SECONDS.
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. KEEP YOUR PANTS ON, WHEELER.
C'MON, JAKE. LET'S GET 'ER REVVED UP...
YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, JEN?
WE HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO TEST ALL OF THE M.A.X. SUIT'S SYSTEMS SINCE THE LAST OVERHAUL.

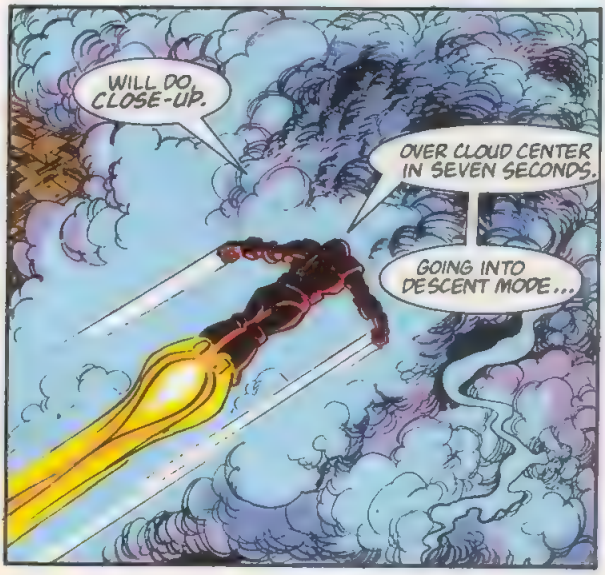

WE'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE THIS THE FIRST FULL SCALE TEST, JAKE. A LOT OF THE STUFF IN HERE HAS NEVER SEEN USE IN THE FIELD.
I'M JUST LEERY ABOUT ALL THIS. WE'VE NEVER HAD TO RUN A MISSION ON U.S. SOIL.
WHY DON'T WE TELL THE ARMY BOYS TO TAKE CARE OF THIS BUSINESS THEMSELVES?


JAKE, IN CASE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN, THESE DAYS WE ARE THE ARMY BOYS.
SPITFIRE RUNS ONLY WHEN AND WHERE UNCLE SAM SAYS.
AND IF WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE IN OUR GOOD WORKS WE HAVE TO DO WHAT UNCLE SAM WANTS.

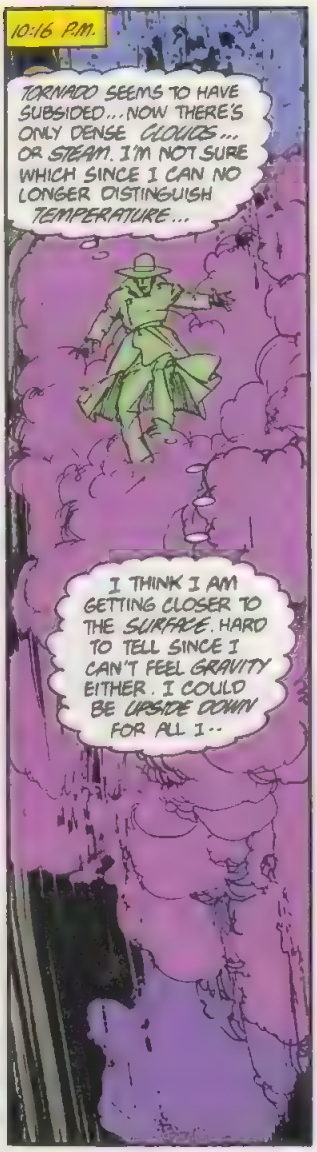

AND TODAY, THAT MEANS CHECKING OUT WHATEVER SEEMS TO BE TAKING PLACE IN PITTSBURGH.
OKAY, LADY. YOUR SUIT.
STAND CLEAR NOW. I DON'T WANT YOU GETTING SUCKED OUT BY THE SLIPSTREAM WHEN I...

...LAUNCH!
ALL SYSTEMS SHOW GREEN AND GO.
AUTOMATED GYRO STABILIZERS ACTIVATED. CRUISE MODE ENGAGED.
HELLO, CLOSE-UP. THIS IS SPITFIRE. DO YOU COPY?
WHAT ARE MY ORDERS, COLONEL?

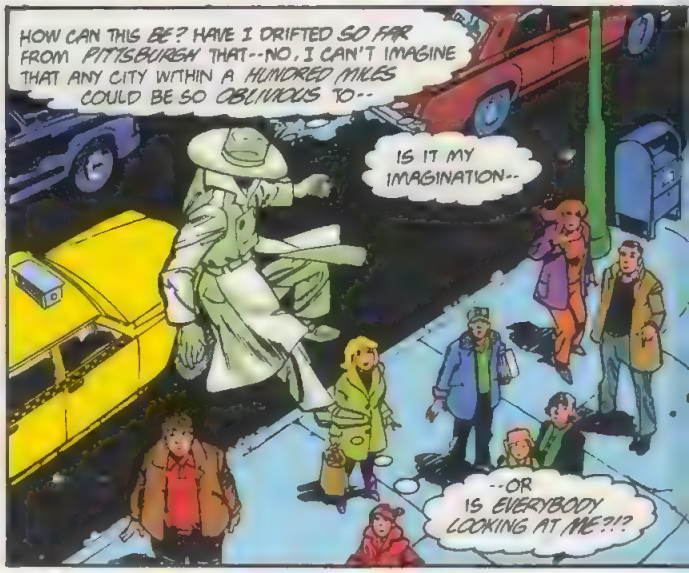
YOU'RE PACKING SOME OF THE MOST SOPHISTICATED SCANNING AND IMAGING EQUIPMENT MODERN SCIENCE CAN PRODUCE.
PROBE THE STORM CLOUD AND REPORT WHAT YOU FIND.


WILL DO, CLOSE-UP.
OVER CLOUD CENTER IN SEVEN SECONDS.
GOING INTO DESCENT MODE...

10:02 P.M.
HEY, WHAT IN THE WORLD IS WITH ALL THIS SMOKE AND STEAM?
WHAT DID THE DISPATCH SAY? "PITTSBURGH BLACKED OUT. COMPLETE ELECTRICAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SHUTDOWN. DISASTER OF UNKNOWN NATURE SUSPECTED. NEED YOU TO INVESTIGATE AT ONCE."
OBVIOUSLY, THEY CALLED FOR ME BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T THINK IT WAS SAFE FOR ANYONE NOT WEARING A FLYING 1260-POUND ENVIRONMENTALLY-SECURE SUIT OF ARMOR!
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING THIS WEIRD. MAYBE JAKE WAS RIGHT. MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE TRIED TO PASS ON THIS LITTLE MISSION.
BUT WHAT SORT OF PHENOMENON COULD ACCOUNT FOR THESE FREAKISH WEATHER CONDITIONS? CERTAINLY NOT A NUCLEAR MELTDOWN--!

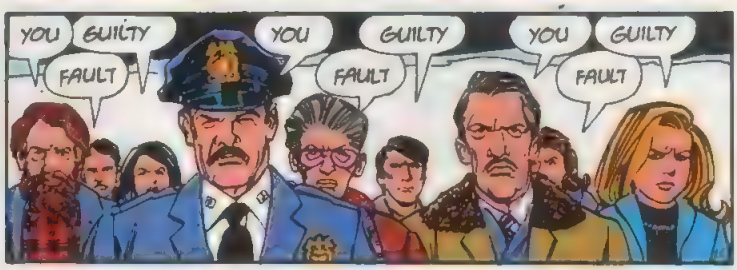

10:16 P.M.
TORNADO SEEMS TO HAVE SUBSIDED... NOW THERE'S ONLY DENSE CLOUDS... OR STEAM. I'M NOT SURE WHICH SINCE I CAN NO LONGER DISTINGUISH TEMPERATURE...
I THINK I AM GETTING CLOSER TO THE SURFACE. HARD TO TELL SINCE I CAN'T FEEL GRAVITY EITHER. I COULD BE UPSIDE DOWN FOR ALL I--

WHAT'S THIS? I SEE ROOFTOPS--BUILDINGS. AMAZING--I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THEM ALL LEVELED BY THE EXPLOSION AND STORM.
PEOPLE! AND THEY'RE JUST CALMLY GOING ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS AS IF NOTHING HAPPENED!

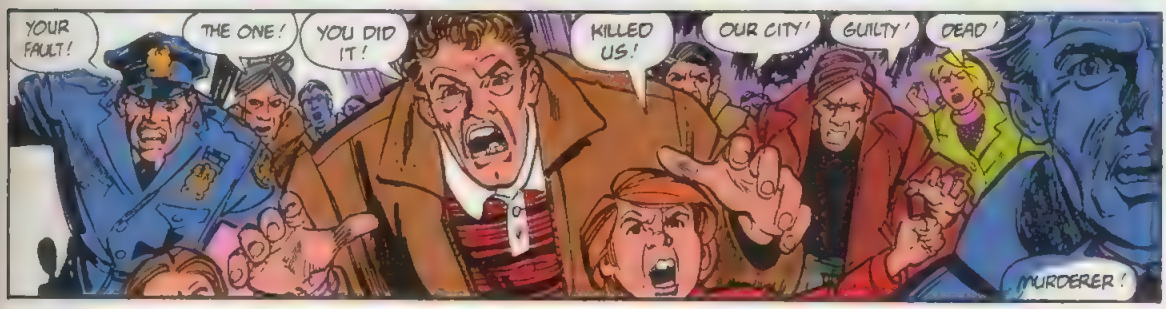

HOW CAN THIS BE? HAVE I DRIFTED SO FAR FROM PITTSBURGH THAT--NO, I CAN'T IMAGINE THAT ANY CITY WITHIN A HUNDRED MILES COULD BE SO OBLIVIOUS TO--
IS IT MY IMAGINATION--
--OR IS EVERYBODY LOOKING AT ME?!?

THEY ARE! THEY'RE LOOKING AT ME! THEY CAN SEE ME!
AND THE GROUND BENEATH ME--I CAN FEEL IT!
H-HELLO! I COME IN PEACE CAN YOU HEAR ME?

I KEEP HEARING SOMETHING--LIKE WHISPERS. YES, I SEE ALL THEIR LIPS MOVING!
ARE YOU TALKING? I CAN'T QUITE HEAR YOU.


YOU
GUILTY
FAULT
YOU
GUILTY
FAULT
YOU
GUILTY
FAULT

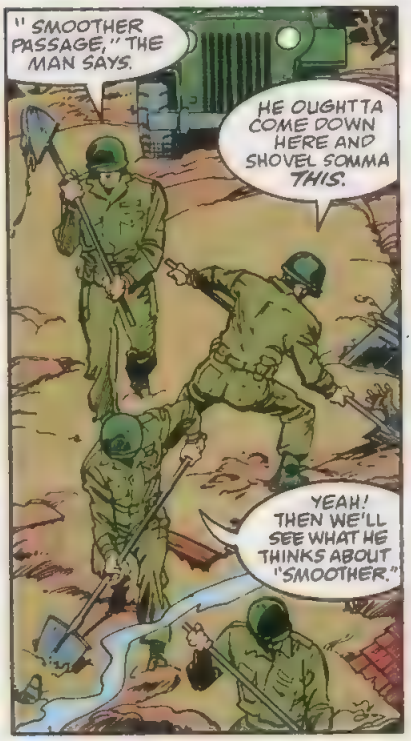
WHAT ARE THEY SAYING? SOMETHING ABOUT FAULT OR GUILT...
PLEASE, SPEAK UP. I--


YOUR FAULT!
THE ONE!
YOU DID IT!
KILLED US!
OUR CITY!
GUILTY!
DEAD!
MURDERER!

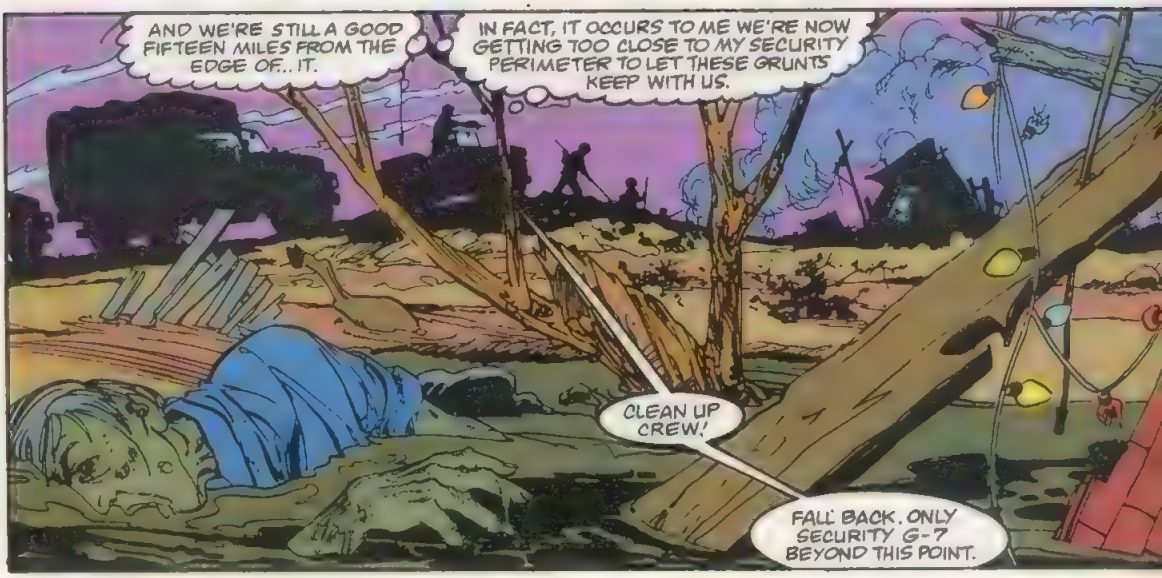
WHAT? ARE YOU SAYING YOU'RE DEAD--LIKE ME!?! THAT... THAT EXPLAINS WHY YOU CAN SEE ME--! YOU SEE, I'M-- OOOPH!
KILLED US!
GET HIM!
KILL HIM!
DEAD
DEAD
TEAR HIM!
CRUSH HIM!
STOP THAT! YOU'VE GOT ME WRONG! I WASN'T THE ONE WHO MADE THAT EXPLOSION! I--UNNNH!
DIE
DIE
DIE

10·11 P.M.
KEEP IT GOING CORPORAL.
I WANT AT LEAST ANOTHER FIVE MILES COVERED BEFORE WE CALL A HALT.
YESSIR...
BUT...THE GOING AIN'T GONNA BE... EASY, SIR.

NO SUCH THING AS EASY IN UNIFORM, CORPORAL.
MAKE FOR THAT DIVISION OVER THERE. LOOKS LIKE FLATTER GROUND BEYOND.
YESSIR.
OR AT LEAST LESS DEBRIS. SHOULD MAKE FOR SMOOTHER PASSAGE.


"SMOOTHER PASSAGE," THE MAN SAYS.
HE OUGHTTA COME DOWN HERE AND SHOVEL SOMMA THIS.
YEAH! THEN WE'LL SEE WHAT HE THINKS ABOUT "SMOOTHER."

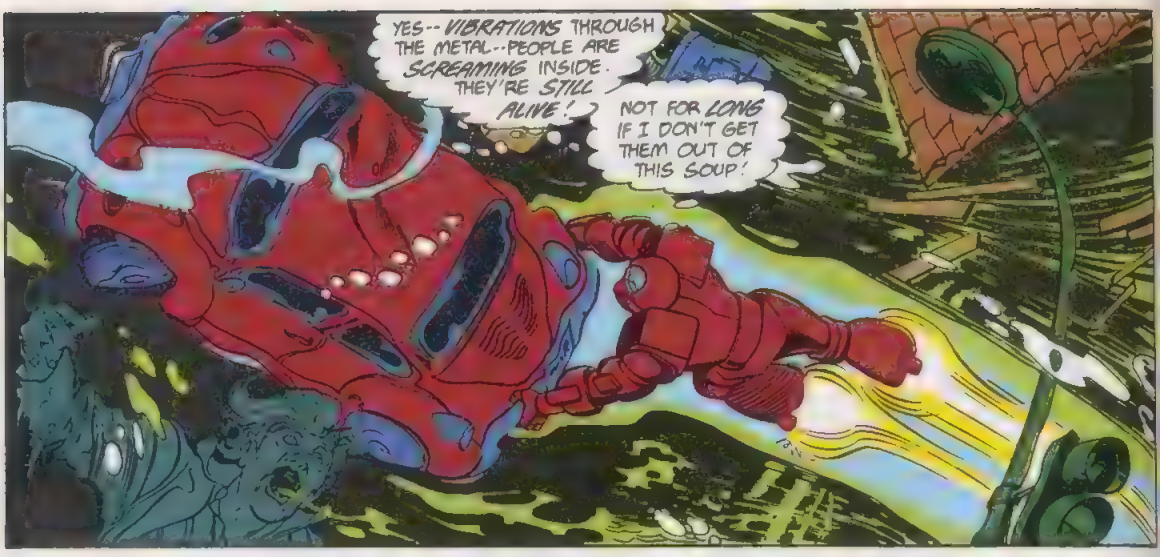
I'VE BEEN TRYING FOR HOURS TO FIND SOME POINT OF REFERENCE, SOME PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE I CAN COMPARE THIS TO.
BUT THERE'S NOTHING. NOTHING IN ANYTHING I'VE EVER SEEN BEFORE.
NO WAR DAMAGE, NO STORM DAMAGE.

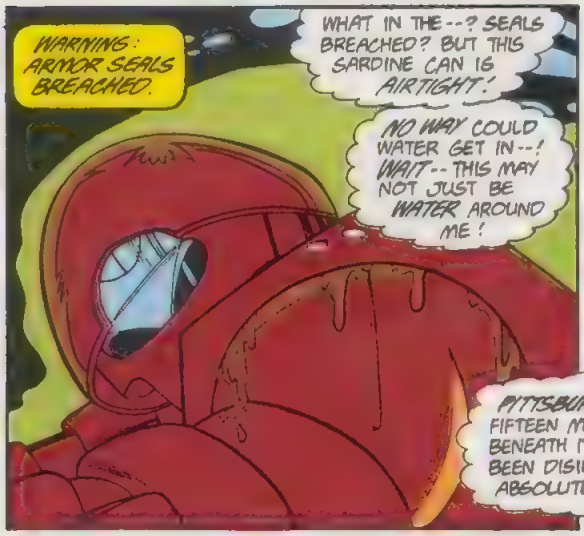

AND WE'RE STILL A GOOD FIFTEEN MILES FROM THE EDGE OF... IT.
IN FACT, IT OCCURS TO ME WE'RE NOW GETTING TOO CLOSE TO MY SECURITY PERIMETER TO LET THESE GRUNTS KEEP WITH US.
CLEAN UP CREW!
FALL BACK. ONLY SECURITY G-7 BEYOND THIS POINT.

START SETTING UP ANOTHER STRING OF WATCHPOSTS ALONG THIS LINE.
THIS IS THE ABSOLUTE LAST POINT TO WHICH WE'LL LET ANY CIVILIANS PASS. ANYBODY ARGUES, SHOOT 'EM!
SIR!
I...RESPECTFULLY REMIND THE COLONEL THIS IS NOT WAR. MARTIAL LAW HAS NOT BEEN DECLARED IN THIS AREA.
YOU'RE RIGHT, SON.
BUT YOU'RE ALSO PLAYING BY THE OLD RULES, AND I'M AFRAID THEY'VE ALL GONE OUT THE WINDOW.
S-SIR...?
TAKE A LOOK AROUND YOU, SON.
WHAT DO YOU THINK WE'RE LOOKING AT HERE? A NUCLEAR ATTACK? A TORNADO STRIP?
NO.
I THINK WE'RE LOOKING AT A WHOLE NEW BALLGAME.
10:13 P.M.
JAKE, YOU STILL READING ME?
SQRRRK OF RANGE SQRRRK TERFERENCE...
GOOD NIGHT, JAKE.
LOOKS LIKE I'VE GOT NO ONE TO TALK TO BUT MYSELF. BRRR, THIS IS REALLY, REALLY WEIRD.

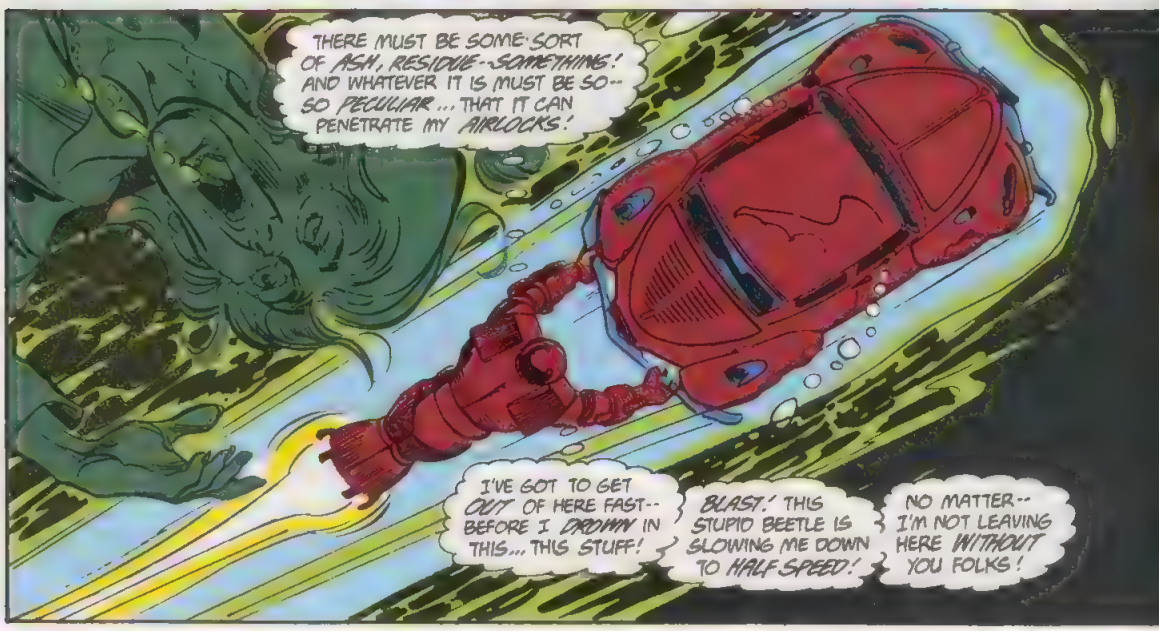
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS! ACCORDING TO MY INSTRUMENTS I'M OVER TWO MILES BENEATH SEA LEVEL! AND I STILL DON'T HAVE A FIX ON THE GROUND BELOW!
HAVE MY TELEMETRY SYSTEMS GONE HAYWIRE -- OR CAN MY READINGS BE ACCURATE? I'D BETTER RUN A SYSTEMS CHECK.
THREE MILES BELOW SEA LEVEL! STILL NO SIGN OF LAND!
SYSTEMS CHECK COMPLETE -- IT'S NOT AN INSTRUMENT MALFUNCTION. I REALLY AM THIS DEEP.
SOMEHOW THERE IS A BIG HOLE WHERE PITTSBURGH WAS! THE ONLY QUESTION NOW IS -- JUST HOW BIG IS THAT HOLE!?!
EIGHT MILES...
NINE...!
THIS IS MIND-BLOWING! THE DEEPEST MAN HAS EVER DUG INTO THE EARTH'S CRUST TILL NOW IS ONLY ABOUT THREE MILES! I'M ALREADY THREE TIMES THAT DEEP!
SURE WISH I'D READ "JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH"
10:41 P.M.
FOURTEEN MILES AND STILL -- WAIT! I AM GETTING A SOUNDING! I THINK I'VE FOUND IT -- THE BOTTOM OF THE PIT!
BETTER CUT THRUSTERS, LEVEL OFF BEFORE EASING DOWN FURTHER.
CAN'T SEE A BLINKING THING THROUGH THIS THICK FOG COVER!
11:02 P.M.
A LAKE. THERE'S A LAKE HERE AT THE BOTTOM. HMMM... A NUMBER OF RIVERS RUN THROUGH PITTSBURGH -- THE ALLEGHENY JOINS WITH -- I FORGET ITS NAME -- TO FORM THE OHIO RIVER. THEY MUST ALL BE DUMPING INTO HERE.
THAT'S NOT ALL THAT'S DUMPING IN. ALL THE DEBRIS FROM THE SURROUNDING AREA MUST HAVE BEEN SWEPT UP OVER THE EDGE...

HAVEN'T SEEN ANY SIGN OF... OF LIFE... SURVIVORS. PROBABLY AREN'T ANY. ANYONE IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY WAS INCINERATED BY WHATEVER HAPPENED...
...AND ANYONE IN THE OUTLYING REGIONS WHO WERE SWEPT UP BY THE HURRICANE AND THROWN OVER THE EDGE PROBABLY DIDN'T SURVIVE THE FIFTEEN-MILE DROP!
BETTER GO IN AND TAKE A SAMPLE OF THE WATER FOR CHEMICAL ANALYSIS.
MIGHT PROVIDE SOME CLUE AS TO WHAT HAPPENED HERE.
DARK AS PITCH DOWN HERE--HAVE TO FLY BY INSTRUMENTS ALONE.
HEY, WHAT'S--I DETECT SOMETHING MOVING AT A FASTER RATE THAN THE SURROUNDING GOOP. SOMETHING--ALIVE?
SONAR READINGS SEEM TO MAKE IT OUT TO BE AN AUTOMOBILE... AN OLD VOLKSWAGEN! THE MOVEMENT'S COMING FROM INSIDE!
AAAAAAH!
LORDOHLORDOH LORDOHLORDOH--!

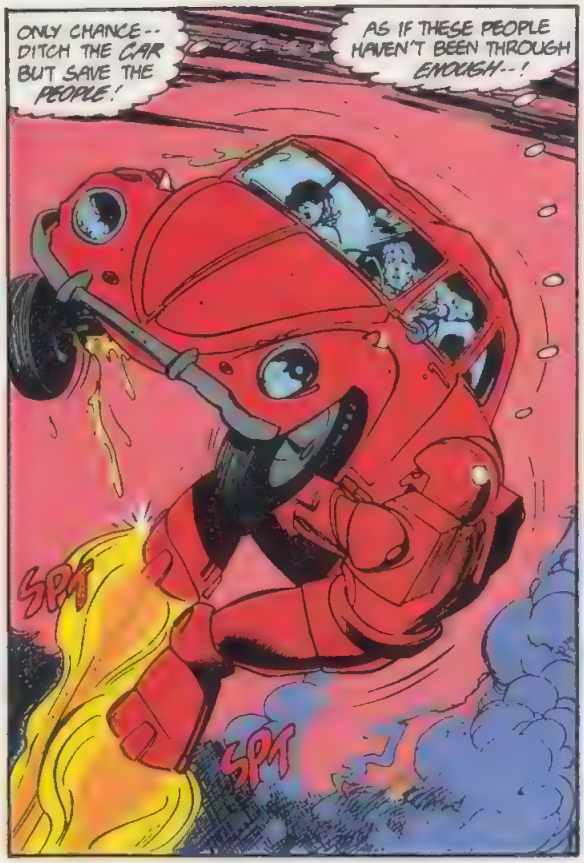

YES-- VIBRATIONS THROUGH THE METAL--PEOPLE ARE SCREAMING INSIDE. THEY'RE STILL ALIVE!
NOT FOR LONG IF I DON'T GET THEM OUT OF THIS SOUP!


WARNING: ARMOR SEALS BREACHED.
WHAT IN THE--? SEALS BREACHED? BUT THIS SARDINE CAN IS AIRTIGHT!
NO WAY COULD WATER GET IN--! WAIT-- THIS MAY NOT JUST BE WATER AROUND ME!

PITTSBURGH AND THE FIFTEEN MILES OF BEDROCK BENEATH IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN DISINTEGRATED INTO ABSOLUTE NOTHINGNESS!


THERE MUST BE SOME SORT OF ASH, RESIDUE--SOMETHING! AND WHATEVER IT IS MUST BE SO-- SO PECULIAR... THAT IT CAN PENETRATE MY AIRLOCKS!
I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE FAST-- BEFORE I DROWN IN THIS... THIS STUFF!
BLAST! THIS STUPID BEETLE IS SLOWING ME DOWN TO HALF SPEED!
NO MATTER-- I'M NOT LEAVING HERE WITHOUT YOU FOLKS!

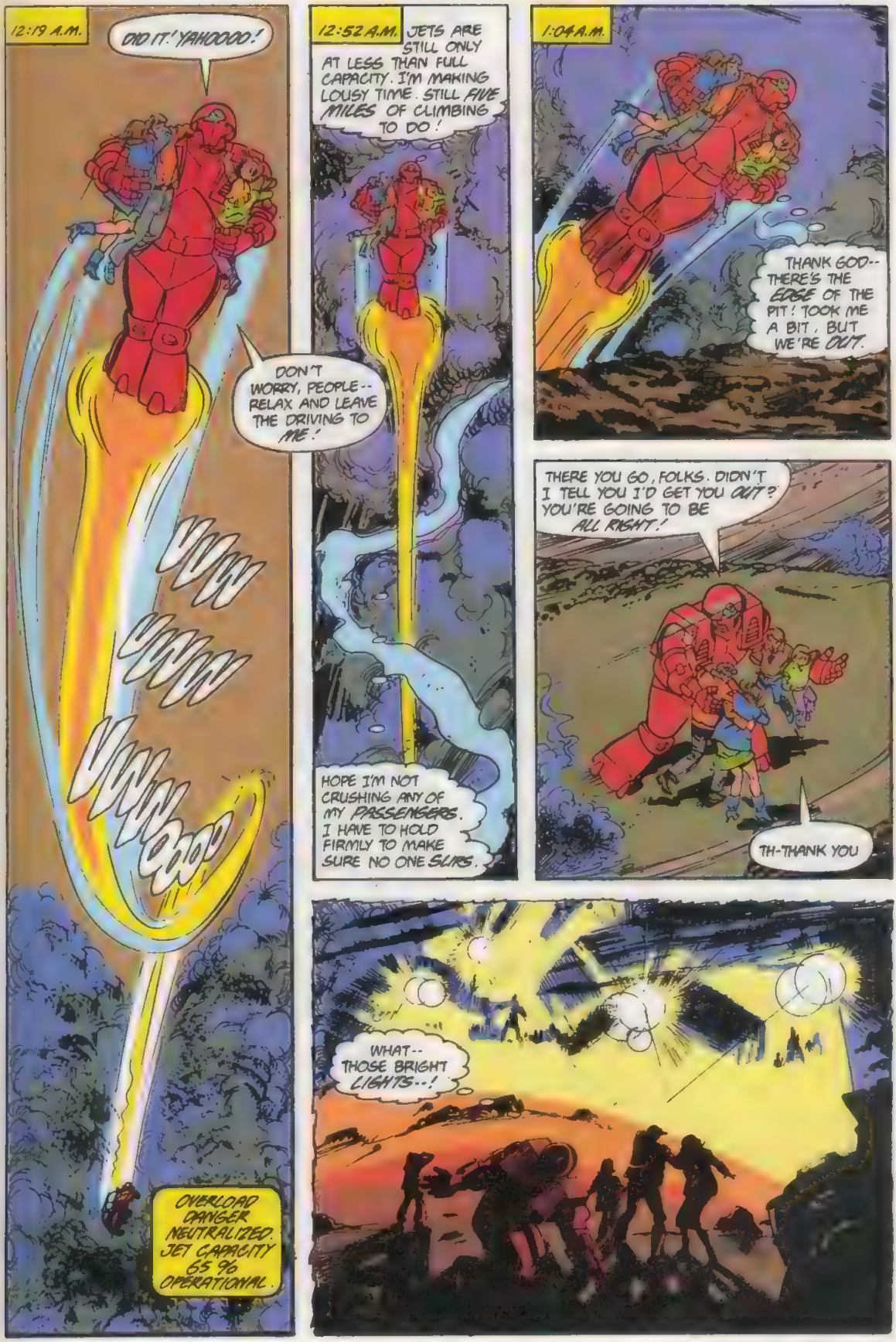
12:01 A.M., DECEMBER 23, 1987.
MADE... IT.! THANK GOODNESS!
SPLOOM
OPENED UP THE EXHAUST VENTS -- BUT I DON'T FEEL THE -- THE PIT-WATER DRAINING!
DOUBT THE AIRSEAL ON THIS VW WAS ANY BETTER OFF THAN MINE.
LEONARD -- LEONARD, WHAT'S HAPPENING?!?
I-I DON'T KNOW -- WE'RE -- WE'RE BACK IN THE AIR FEELS LIKE!
MOMMMMMMMY!
12:18 A.M.
WARNING: 20% IMPAIRMENT OF JET FUNCTIONS.
WHAT--?
SPT
SPT
SPT
OVERLOAD. OVERLOAD. REDUCE CARGO OR FURTHER IMPAIRMENT OF FUNCTIONS 99% PROBABLE.
REDUCE CARGO--? BUT--I--THAT MEANS I'D HAVE TO--
NO--I'M NOT GOING TO ABANDON WHAT MIGHT BE THE ONLY SURVIVORS OF THIS HOLOCAUST!


ONLY CHANCE-- DITCH THE CAR BUT SAVE THE PEOPLE!
AS IF THESE PEOPLE HAVEN'T BEEN THROUGH ENOUGH--!
SPT
SPT

OVERLOAD. OVERLOAD. 7 SECONDS TO JET MALFUNCTION.
WRNNCH
NO TIME FOR THE SUBTLE APPROACH.
DON'T BE ALARMED, FOLKS! I'VE COME TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE!

5 SECONDS.
PLEASE, I HAVE NO TIME TO ARGUE-- UNBUCKLE YOURSELVES AND YOUR CHILDREN AND CLIMB OUT OF YOUR CAR!
WHAT--? I--WHO--?
3 SECONDS TO JET MALFUNCTION.
HAROLD, DON'T LET IT GET US!

I'M BEGGING YOU--PLEASE DO AS I SAY, OR WE'RE ALL DEAD!
JANEY, TIMMY--!
EASY NOW COME ON, MARGE!
1 SECOND TO REDUCE CARGO.


12:19 A.M.
DID IT! YAHOOOO!
DON'T WORRY, PEOPLE-- RELAX AND LEAVE THE DRIVING TO ME!
OVERLOAD DANGER NEUTRALIZED. JET CAPACITY 65 % OPERATIONAL.
12:52 A.M.
JETS ARE STILL ONLY AT LESS THAN FULL CAPACITY. I'M MAKING LOUSY TIME. STILL FIVE MILES OF CLIMBING TO DO!
HOPE I'M NOT CRUSHING ANY OF MY PASSENGERS. I HAVE TO HOLD FIRMLY TO MAKE SURE NO ONE SLIPS.
1:04 A.M.
THANK GOD-- THERE'S THE EDGE OF THE PIT! TOOK ME A BIT, BUT WE'RE OUT.
THERE YOU GO, FOLKS. DIDN'T I TELL YOU I'D GET YOU OUT? YOU'RE GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT!
TH-THANK YOU
WHAT-- THOSE BRIGHT LIGHTS--!

RELAX! IT'S THE ARMY!

THEY'LL TAKE YOU FROM HERE--GET YOU TO SAFETY.

WOW! IT'S THAT SPITFIRE ROBOT WE WERE BRIEFED ABOUT! DIDN'T REALIZE IT WAS SO BIG!

OH, MOMMY--THAT TRANSFORMER SAVED US!

YES...IT DID, DOLLY.

BLESS YOU, WHOEVER YOU ARE. IF YOU HADN'T SHOWN UP, MY FAMILY AND I--

'S OKAY.

FOUR LIVES SAVED... I SHOULD FEEL GLAD. BUT ALL I FEEL IS NUMB. THINKING OF THE MILLIONS WHO WERE VAPORIZED OR DROWNED OR BURIED--

UH, "SPITFIRE"--COLONEL BROWNING WANTS TO SEE YOU--ASAP.

1:29 AM.

SIR?

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO'S SEEN THIS THING UP CLOSE, SWENSEN. I'VE READ THE TRANSCRIPT OF YOUR SIGNALS, BUT I WANT TO HEAR IT FROM YOUR OWN LIPS.

NOW.

YOU...ASK A LOT, COLONEL.

I'M NOT A SOLDIER. I DON'T PROFESS TO HAVING THE "RIGHT STUFF."

DOWN THERE IT WAS ALL I COULD DO TO KEEP FROM PUKING MY GUTS OUT.

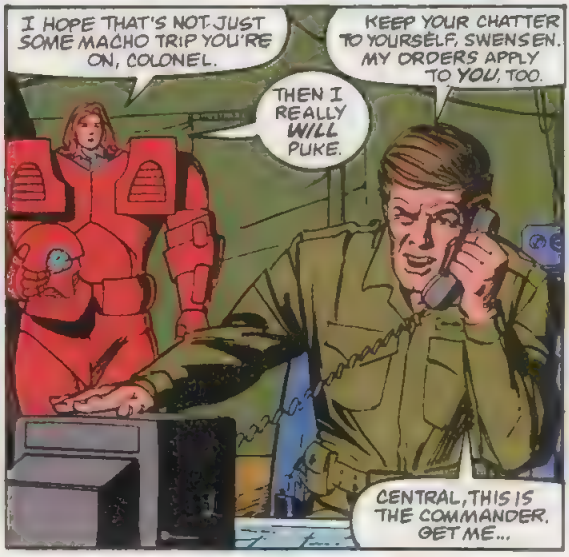
BUT...IF YOU WANT IT...

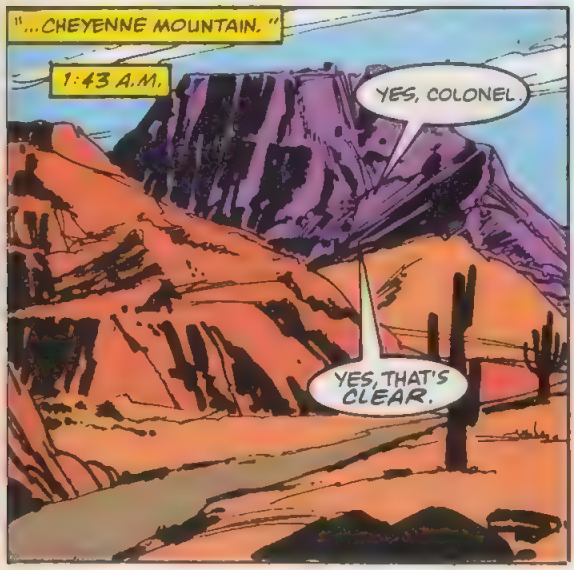
"HERE.."

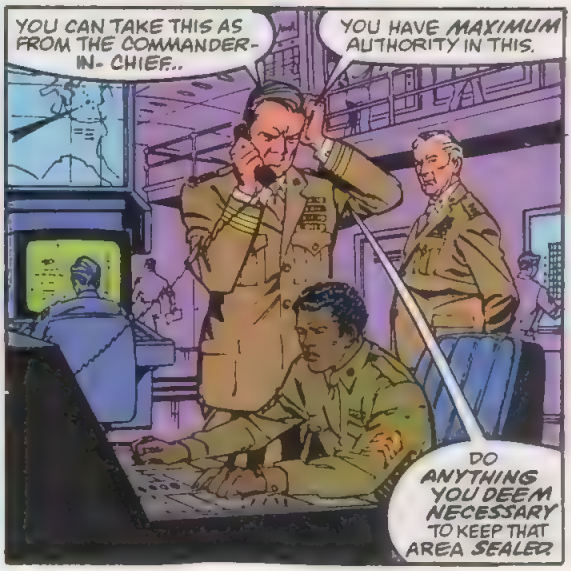
"...IT..."

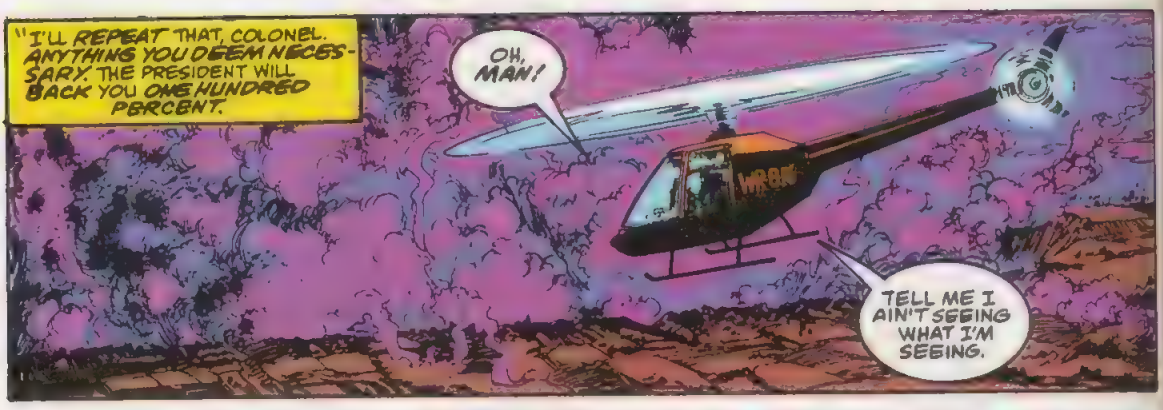
"...IS..."
DEAR...
...GOD...

SERGEANT...
PASS THE WORD ALONG. I WANT THIS BASE CAMP SEALED UP TIGHT. NO SIGNALS GO OUT UNLESS I SEND 'EM.
NOTHING COMES IN, BUT IT COMES IN THROUGH ME.
SIR.


I HOPE THAT'S NOT JUST SOME MACHO TRIP YOU'RE ON, COLONEL.
KEEP YOUR CHATTER TO YOURSELF, SWENSEN. MY ORDERS APPLY TO YOU, TOO.
THEN I REALLY WILL PUKE.
CENTRAL, THIS IS THE COMMANDER. GET ME...


"...CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN."
1:43 A.M.
YES, COLONEL.
YES, THAT'S CLEAR.


YOU CAN TAKE THIS AS FROM THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF..
YOU HAVE MAXIMUM AUTHORITY IN THIS.
DO ANYTHING YOU DEEM NECESSARY TO KEEP THAT AREA SEALED


"I'LL REPEAT THAT, COLONEL. ANYTHING YOU DEEM NECESSARY. THE PRESIDENT WILL BACK YOU ONE HUNDRED PERCENT.
OH, MAN!
TELL ME I AIN'T SEEING WHAT I'M SEEING.

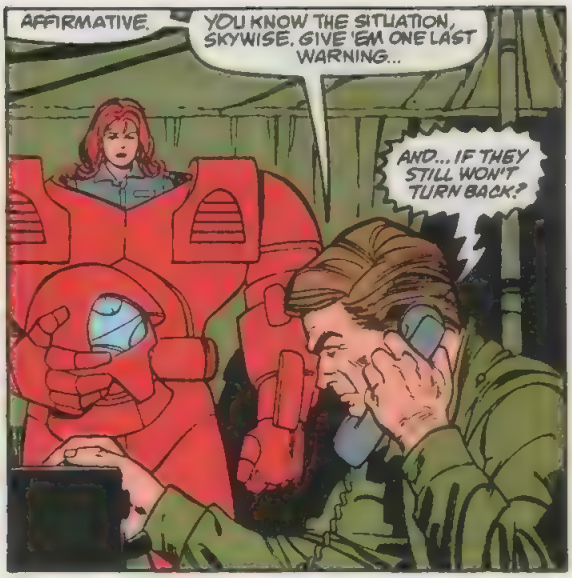
DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, SMITTY.
BUT I'M SEEIN' THE BIGGEST DANG STORY EVER TO COME DOWN TH' PIKE. AN' I AIN'T ABOUT T'TELL ANYBODY IT AIN'T THERE!
BUT...
PITTSBURGH! WHERE IN THE--?
HOLD IT. SOMEBODY CALLIN' US...

I REPEAT: YOU ARE IN SECURITY AIRSPACE.
YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO FOLLOW US BACK TO A HOLDING AREA. DO YOU READ ME, CIVILIAN CRAFT?

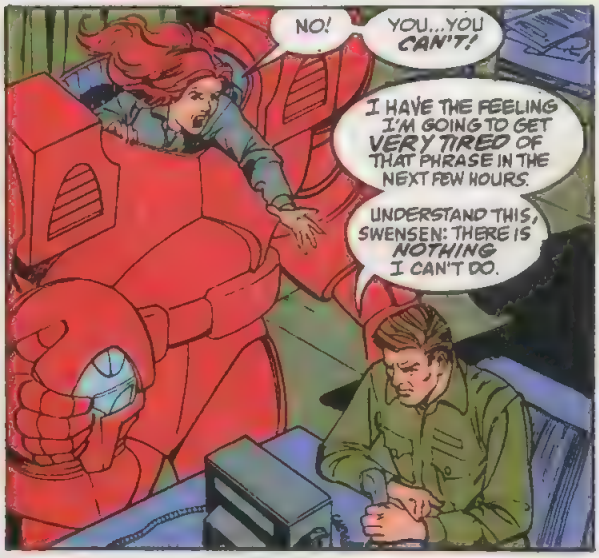
OH, MAN! THIS JUST GETS BETTER AN' BETTER!
YEAH, I READ YOU.
CAN YOU SEE THIS?
AFFIRMATIVE.
LOOK, BUDDY, DON'T SCREW AROUND.

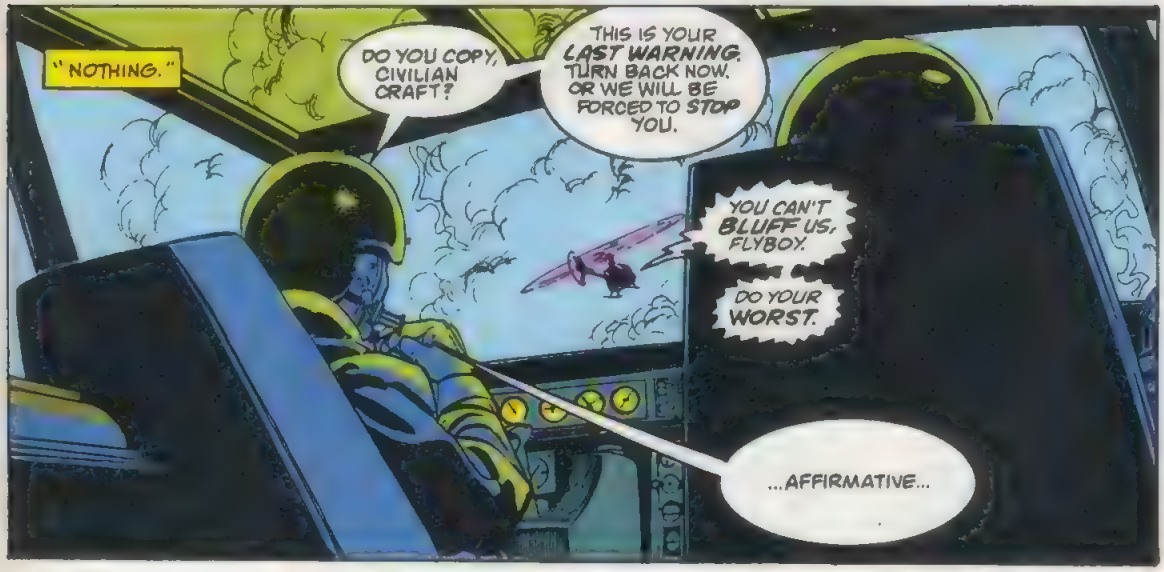
THIS IS SERIOUS.
BUSTER, YOU DON'T KNOW THE HALF OF IT.
THERE'S A STORY DOWN THERE, AND A LITTLE THING CALLED THE FIRST AMENDMENT SAYS WE GOT A RIGHT TO REPORT IT!

OH, CRAP!
SKYWISE SIX TO GROUND ZERO.
DID YOU COPY THAT TRANSMISSION, COLONEL.
T. SHOEMAKER


AFFIRMATIVE.
YOU KNOW THE SITUATION, SKYWISE. GIVE 'EM ONE LAST WARNING...
AND... IF THEY STILL WON'T TURN BACK?

SHOOT THEM DOWN, SKY-WISE.


NO!
YOU...YOU CAN'T!
I HAVE THE FEELING I'M GOING TO GET VERY TIRED OF THAT PHRASE IN THE NEXT FEW HOURS.
UNDERSTAND THIS, SWENSEN: THERE IS NOTHING I CAN'T DO.


"NOTHING."
DO YOU COPY, CIVILIAN CRAFT?
THIS IS YOUR LAST WARNING. TURN BACK NOW, OR WE WILL BE FORCED TO STOP YOU.
YOU CAN'T BLUFF US, FLYBOY.
DO YOUR WORST.
...AFFIRMATIVE...

BOOOWOOM

2:00 AM

FEELS LIKE... TIME'S STANDING STILL!

I KNOW HOW BAD YOU MUST FEEL TO HAVE YOUR *LIVES* SUDDENLY *TAKEN* FROM YOU-- BELIEVE ME *I KNOW!*

STOP! YOU MUST *LISTEN* TO ME AND STOP THIS!

DESTROYER

MONSTER

MURDERER

KILLER

GETTING AWAY

HOLD HIM

TEAR HIM APART.

BUT I HAD *NOTHING* TO DO WITH WHAT *HAPPENED* TO YOU! I *SENSED* SOMETHING WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN. BUT I SWEAR TO YOU--

--THERE WAS *NOTHING* I COULD DO!

I'M SORRY-- TRULY, TRULY *SORRY*

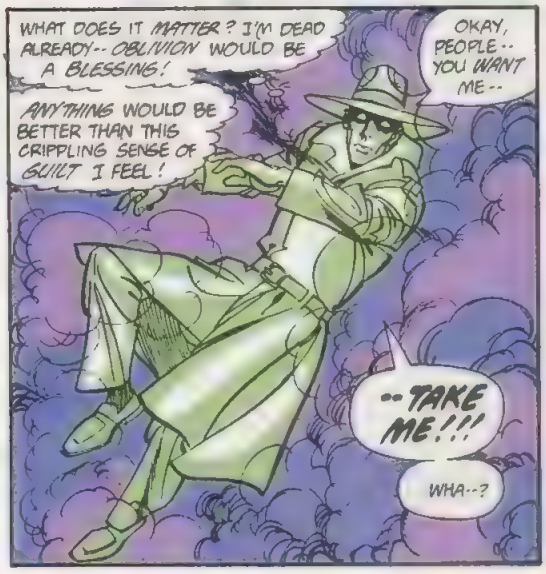
FLOATING AWAY
DIDN'T YOU HOLD ON
GET HIM
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM
AVENGE PITTSBURGH

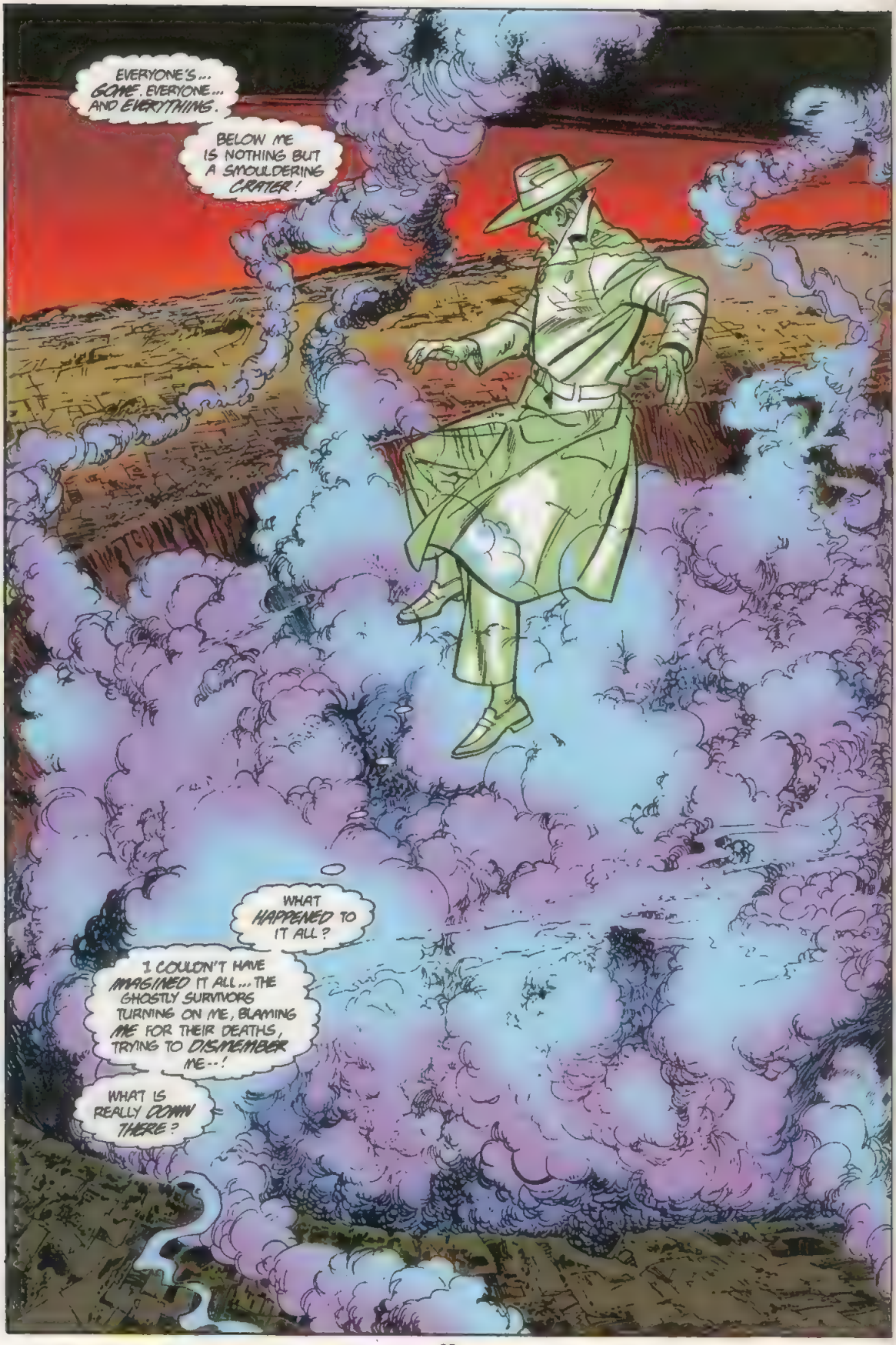
IF HE CAN FLOAT, WHY CAN'T ME?
WHAT? THEY'RE--!
COME ON
FREE OURSELVES

OF COURSE! THEY'RE PHANTOMS LIKE ME!
DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY.
HE MUST DIE

CLOSING IN--I SEE HUNDREDS, THOUSANDS OF THEM--!
HOW CAN THIS BE HAPPENING? THIS IS UNREAL--SO MANY GHOSTS OUT FOR MY BLOOD!

BLOOD--? HAH! I DON'T HAVE BLOOD ANYMORE! NO BLOOD, NO BODY, NOTHING--!
WHAT'S THE USE OF TRYING TO ESCAPE? THEY'LL OVERTAKE ME SOONER OR LATER ANYWAY!
MAY AS WELL SURRENDER--LET THEM DO TO ME AS THEY WILL.


WHAT DOES IT MATTER? I'M DEAD ALREADY--OBLIVION WOULD BE A BLESSING!
ANYTHING WOULD BE BETTER THAN THIS CRIPPLING SENSE OF GUILT I FEEL!
OKAY, PEOPLE--YOU WANT ME--
--TAKE ME!!!
WHA--?


EVERYONE'S... GONE. EVERYONE... AND EVERYTHING.
BELOW ME IS NOTHING BUT A SMOULDERING CRATER!
WHAT HAPPENED TO IT ALL?
I COULDN'T HAVE IMAGINED IT ALL... THE GHOSTLY SURVIVORS TURNING ON ME, BLAMING ME FOR THEIR DEATHS, TRYING TO DISMEMBER ME--!
WHAT IS REALLY DOWN THERE?

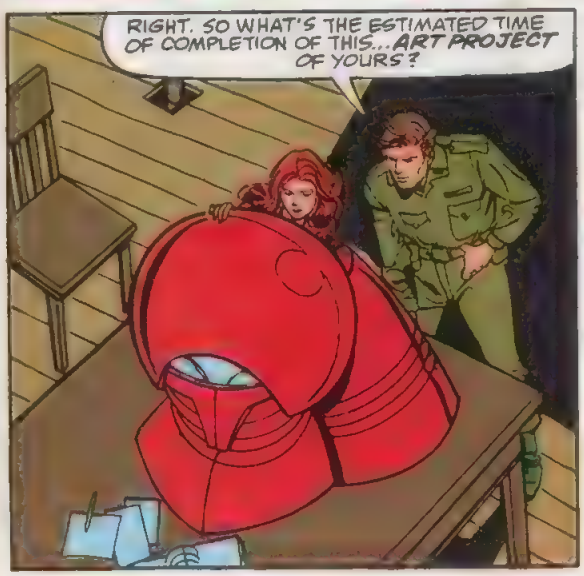
3:18 A.M.

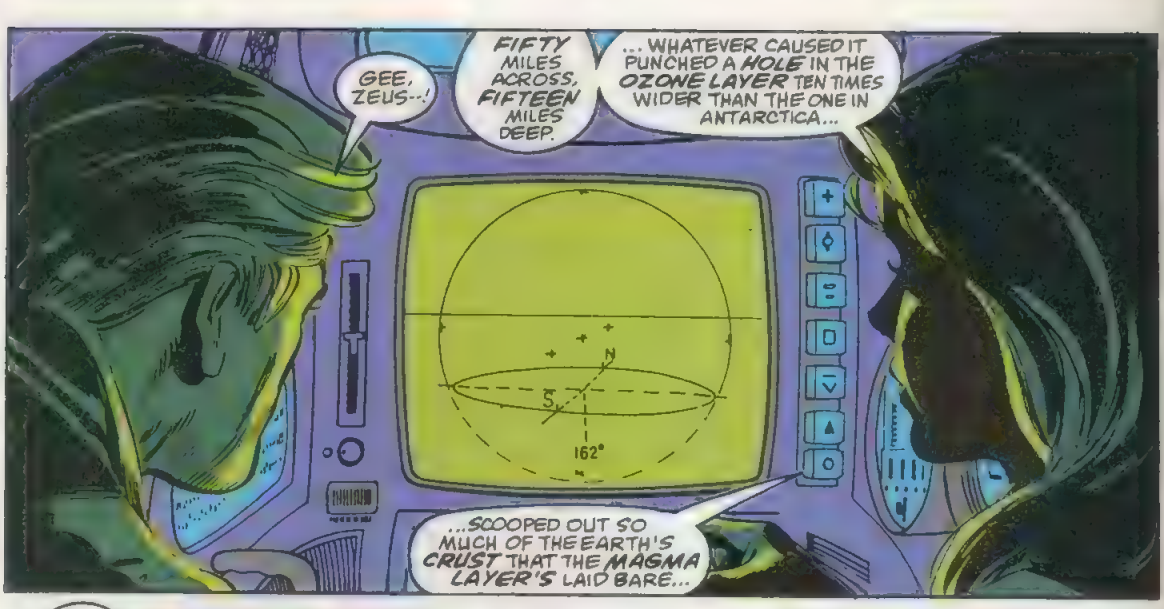
SWENSEN, YOU'VE BEEN SWEATING OVER THAT OVERSIZE *SOUP CAN* FOR THE PAST *TWO HOURS* WITHOUT UTTERING SO MUCH AS A WORD. NOW I KNOW KEEPING YOUR *HANDS* BUSY TAKES YOUR *MIND* OFF THE HORROR OF... WHAT YOU *SAW*...

--BUT I NEED THAT *VIDEO TRANSMISSION* YOU SAID YOU COULD PLAY ME SO I CAN DECIDE WHAT--.

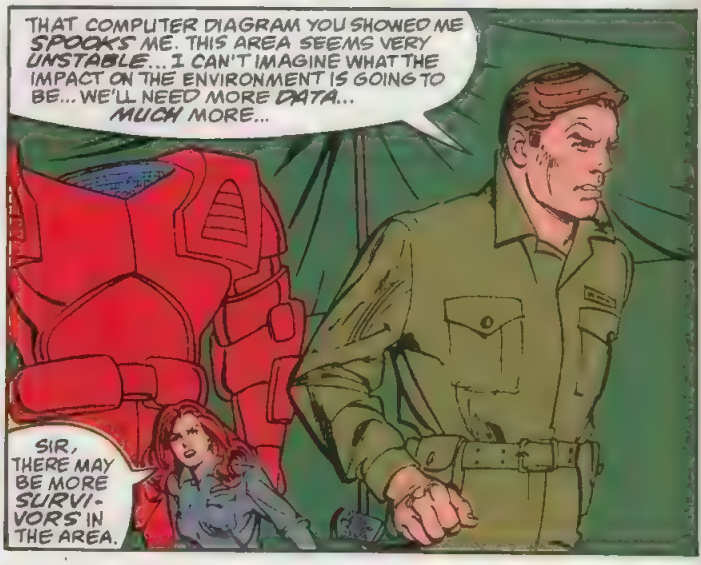
IT'S NOT JUST A *VIDEO-TAPE*, COLONEL. I'VE BEEN FEEDING DATA INTO *M.A.X.'S COMPUTER GRAPHICS* PROGRAM--

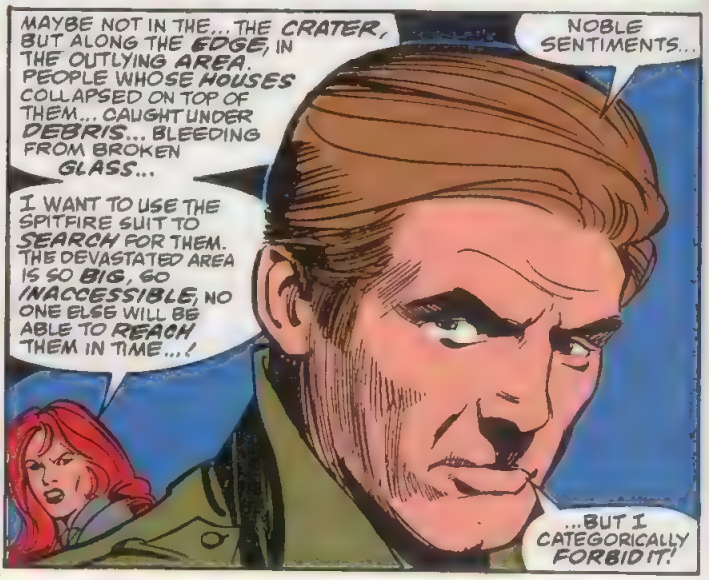
--IN ORDER TO GENERATE A *COMPOSITE IMAGE* OF THE ENTIRE PITTSBURGH AREA AS IT NOW... *EXISTS*.

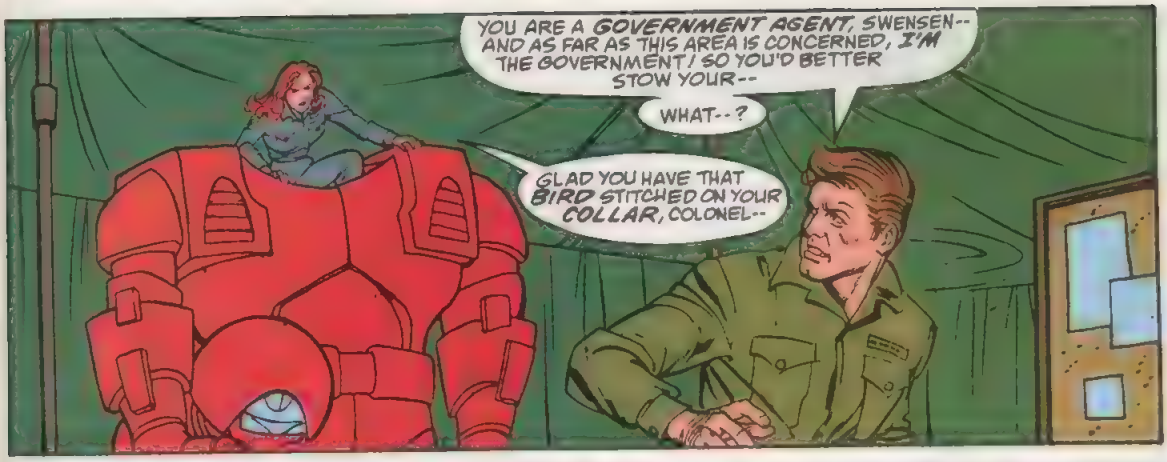


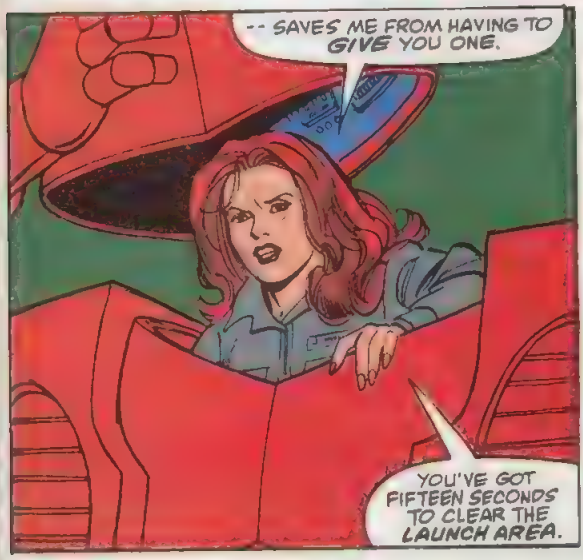

GEE, ZEUS--!
FIFTY MILES ACROSS, FIFTEEN MILES DEEP.
...WHATEVER CAUSED IT PUNCHED A HOLE IN THE OZONE LAYER TEN TIMES WIDER THAN THE ONE IN ANTARCTICA...
N
S
162°
...SCOOPED OUT SO MUCH OF THE EARTH'S CRUST THAT THE MAGMA LAYER'S LAID BARE...

I... SEE...
YOUR SOUP CAN... IS IT OPERATIONAL YET? HAVE YOU FILTERED OUT WHATEVER THAT SLUDGE YOU TOLD ME SEEPED IN?
I SUPPOSE SO.
GOOD. I NEED YOU TO GO BACK IN THERE, GATHER MORE DATA FOR THE SCIENCE BOYS...


THAT COMPUTER DIAGRAM YOU SHOWED ME SPOOKS ME. THIS AREA SEEMS VERY UNSTABLE... I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT THE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT IS GOING TO BE... WE'LL NEED MORE DATA... MUCH MORE...
SIR, THERE MAY BE MORE SURVIVORS IN THE AREA.


MAYBE NOT IN THE... THE CRATER, BUT ALONG THE EDGE, IN THE OUTLYING AREA. PEOPLE WHOSE HOUSES COLLAPSED ON TOP OF THEM... CAUGHT UNDER DEBRIS... BLEEDING FROM BROKEN GLASS...
NOBLE SENTIMENTS...
I WANT TO USE THE SPITFIRE SUIT TO SEARCH FOR THEM. THE DEVASTATED AREA IS SO BIG, SO INACCESSIBLE, NO ONE ELSE WILL BE ABLE TO REACH THEM IN TIME...!
...BUT I CATEGORICALLY FORBID IT!

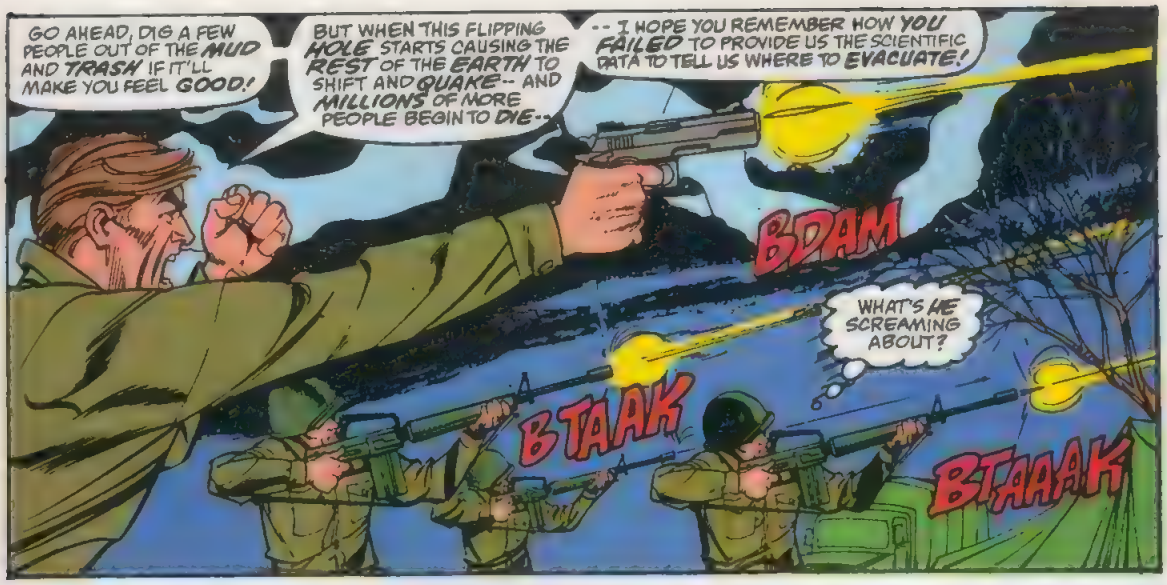

YOU ARE A GOVERNMENT AGENT, SWENSEN-- AND AS FAR AS THIS AREA IS CONCERNED, I'M THE GOVERNMENT! SO YOU'D BETTER STOW YOUR--
WHAT--?
GLAD YOU HAVE THAT BIRD STITCHED ON YOUR COLLAR, COLONEL--

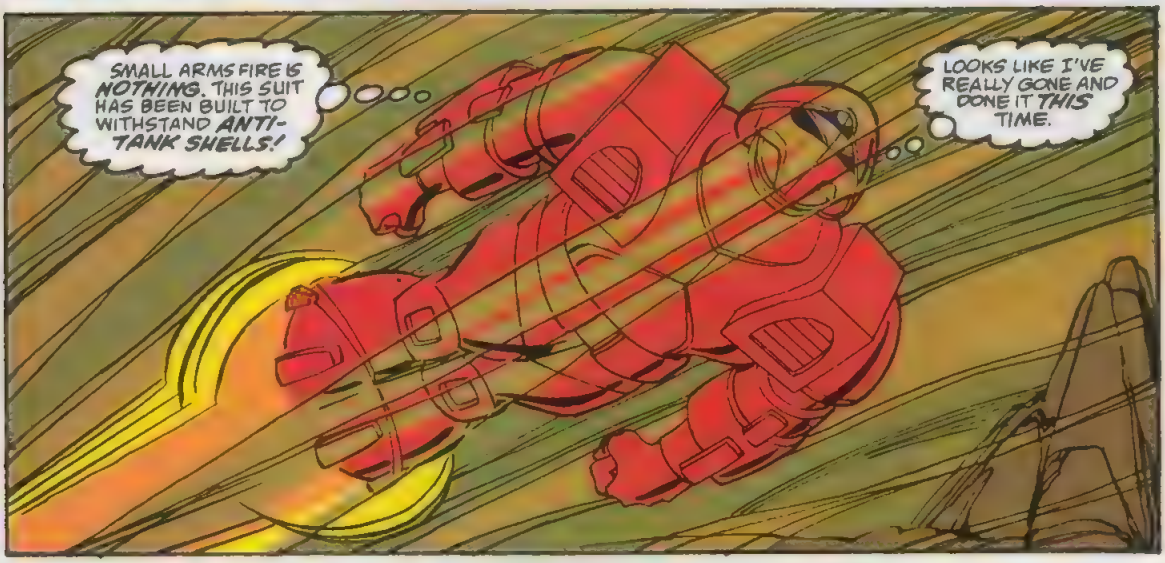

-- SAVES ME FROM HAVING TO GIVE YOU ONE.
YOU'VE GOT FIFTEEN SECONDS TO CLEAR THE LAUNCH AREA.

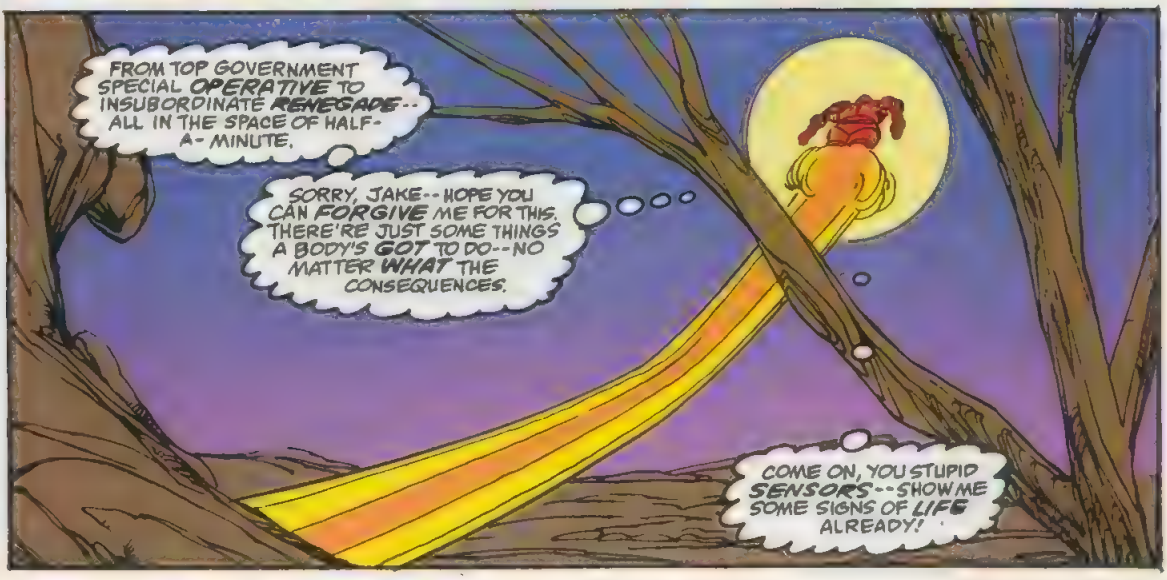
SWENSEN! HAUL YOUR BUTT OUT OF THAT TWO-TON TINKERTOY RIGHT NOW, OR I'LL HAVE YOU COURT-MARTIALED--!
TEN!
NINE!

COLONEL--?
CLEAR THE AREA-- MOVE!
HUH?

HEY!
SPITFIRE'S GONE A.W.O.L.!
SHOOT HER! SHOOT HER DOWN!!!
YES, SIR!
BDAM BDAM
BLAST YOU, SWENSEN! I'M THE LAW HERE--! WITHOUT LAW, CIVILIZATION WILL CRUMBLE--!


GO AHEAD, DIG A FEW PEOPLE OUT OF THE MUD AND TRASH IF IT'LL MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD!
BUT WHEN THIS FLIPPING HOLE STARTS CAUSING THE REST OF THE EARTH TO SHIFT AND QUAKE-- AND MILLIONS OF MORE PEOPLE BEGIN TO DIE--
--I HOPE YOU REMEMBER HOW YOU FAILED TO PROVIDE US THE SCIENTIFIC DATA TO TELL US WHERE TO EVACUATE!
BDAM
WHAT'S HE SCREAMING ABOUT?
BTAAK
BTAAAK


SMALL ARMS FIRE IS NOTHING. THIS SUIT HAS BEEN BUILT TO WITHSTAND ANTI-TANK SHELLS!
LOOKS LIKE I'VE REALLY GONE AND DONE IT THIS TIME.


FROM TOP GOVERNMENT SPECIAL OPERATIVE TO INSUBORDINATE RENEGADE-- ALL IN THE SPACE OF HALF-A-MINUTE.
SORRY, JAKE--HOPE YOU CAN FORGIVE ME FOR THIS. THERE'RE JUST SOME THINGS A BODY'S GOT TO DO--NO MATTER WHAT THE CONSEQUENCES.
COME ON, YOU STUPID SENSORS--SHOW ME SOME SIGNS OF LIFE ALREADY!

4:21 A.M.

THE CITY'S GONE... NOTHING LEFT BUT A HUGE CRATER RAPIDLY FILLING WITH WATER AND DEBRIS.

IT'S HORRIBLE. THE MIND CAN'T ACCEPT SUCH...SUCH CARNAGE, SUCH LOSS OF LIFE.

MY MIND COULDN'T. I JUST COULDN'T BRING MYSELF TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE REALITY OF WHAT HAPPENED...

I WENT INSANE. I BEGAN TO HALLUCINATE A SCENARIO FAR EASIER FOR ME TO ACCEPT THAN THE DEATHS OF A MILLION PEOPLE!

I IMAGINED SURVIVORS--PHANTASMAL BEINGS LIKE MYSELF... BEINGS WHO BLAMED ME FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM.

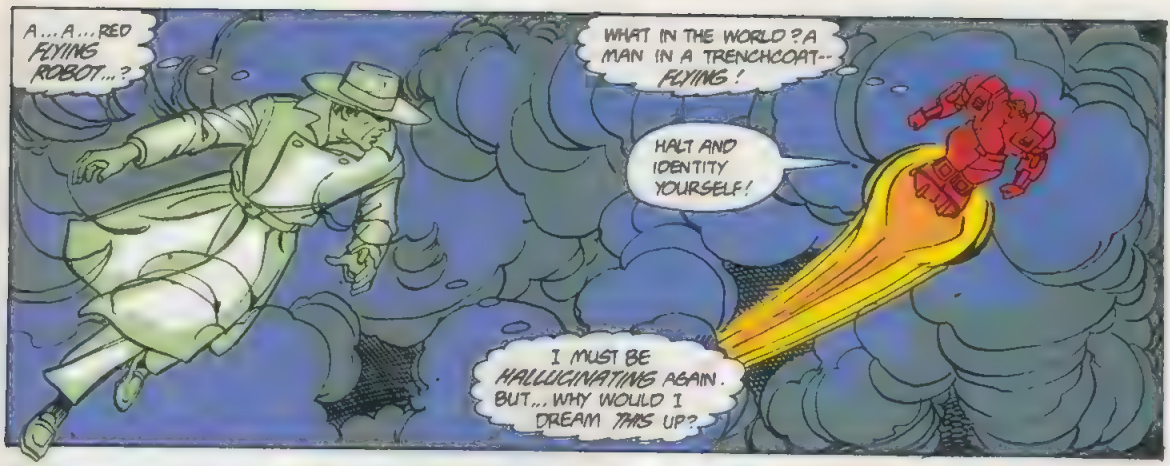
WHY? WHY DID I IMAGINE THEM BLAMING ME? THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD HAVE DONE TO STOP THE TALL BLOND MAN. I'M JUST A STUPID GHOST, FOR GOD'S SAKE!

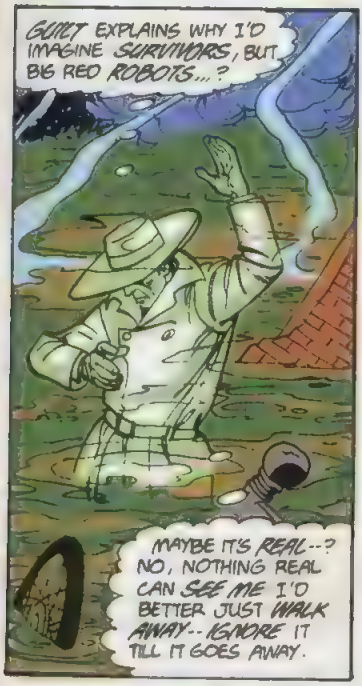
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO DO ONE BLESSED THING FOR WELL OVER A YEAR NOW

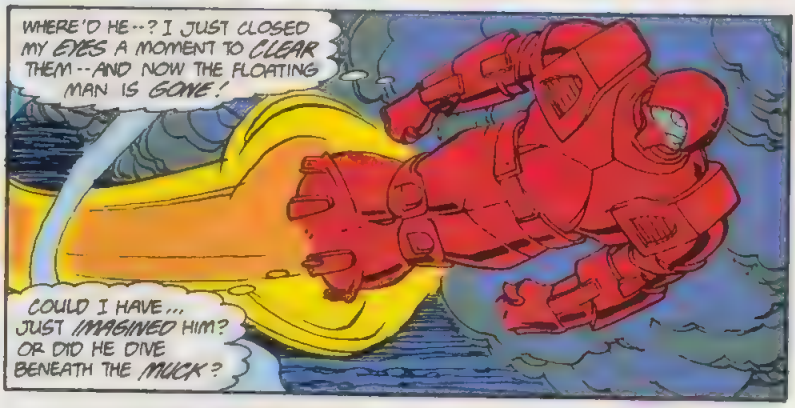
I CAN'T AFFECT ANYTHING-- I'M JUST A WITNESS! AND A VERY POOR ONE AT THAT, DISREGARDING THE EVIDENCE OF WHAT PASSES FOR MY SENSES FOR SOME NONSENSE OUT OF THE TWILIGHT ZONE.

I ONLY WISH-- WHAT'S THAT SOUND?

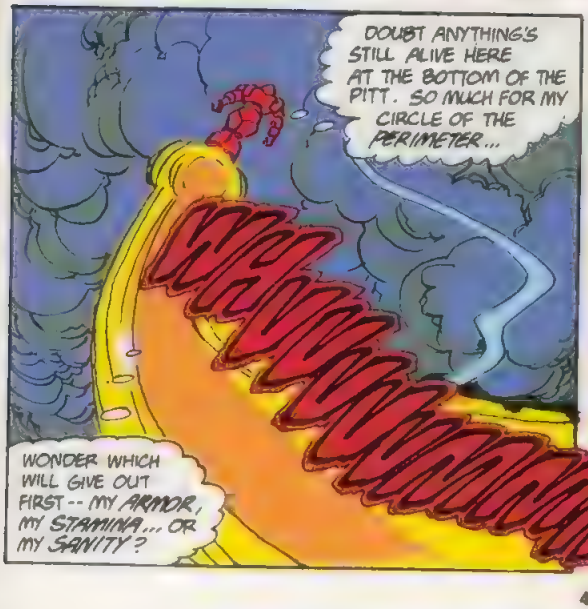
WHHHNNNNNN


A... A... RED FLYING ROBOT...?
WHAT IN THE WORLD? A MAN IN A TRENCHCOAT-- FLYING!
HALT AND IDENTITY YOURSELF!
I MUST BE HALLUCINATING AGAIN. BUT... WHY WOULD I DREAM THIS UP?


GUILT EXPLAINS WHY I'D IMAGINE SURVIVORS, BUT BIG RED ROBOTS...?
MAYBE IT'S REAL--? NO, NOTHING REAL CAN SEE ME I'D BETTER JUST WALK AWAY-- IGNORE IT TILL IT GOES AWAY.


WHERE'D HE--? I JUST CLOSED MY EYES A MOMENT TO CLEAR THEM--AND NOW THE FLOATING MAN IS GONE!
COULD I HAVE... JUST IMAGINED HIM? OR DID HE DIVE BENEATH THE MUCK?

CAN'T PICK HIM UP ON ANY OF MY SENSORS. GREAT. I'M LOSING MY MARBLES--SEEING LITTLE MEN WHO AREN'T THERE!


DOUBT ANYTHING'S STILL ALIVE HERE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PITT. SO MUCH FOR MY CIRCLE OF THE PERIMETER...
WHUUUUUUUM
WONDER WHICH WILL GIVE OUT FIRST-- MY ARMOR, MY STAMINA... OR MY SANITY?

IS IT GONE YET? I THINK I HEAR JETS FADING IN THE DISTANCE.
MAY NOT BE THOSE OF A BIG RED ROBOT, THOUGH.

WHAT POSSESSED ME TO *HIDE*? I MAY *NEVER KNOW* WHAT IT WAS NOW.

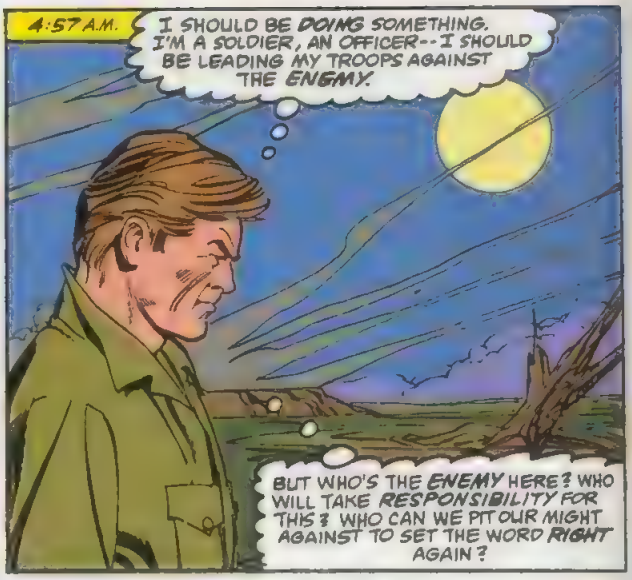
NO ONE KNOWS WHY THEY WERE PLACED ON EARTH... OR WHY THINGS HAPPEN TO THEM AS THEY DID. IT'S SOMETHING A PERSON HAS TO *FIGURE OUT* FOR HIMSELF, GIVEN ENOUGH *TIME*...

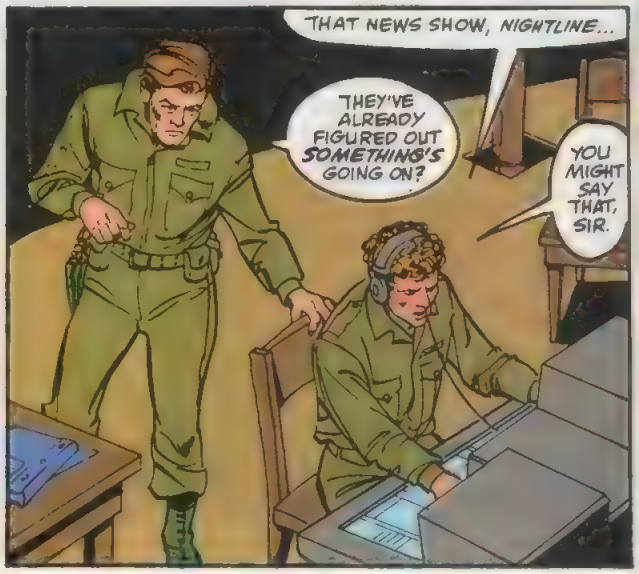
GUESS IT DOESN'T *MATTER*. ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT I FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO *NEXT*... SOMETHING *MEANINGFUL*.

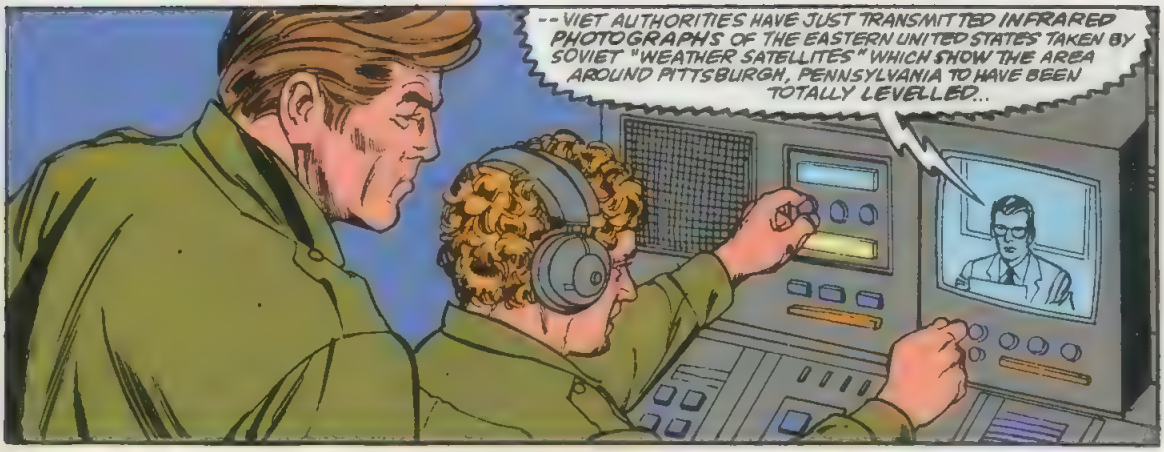
THERE WAS *NO REASON* WHY I WAS DRAWN TO PITTSBURGH AND MADE TO LIVE THROUGH WHAT I HAVE. NONE AT ALL-- UNLESS I *MAKE* A REASON.

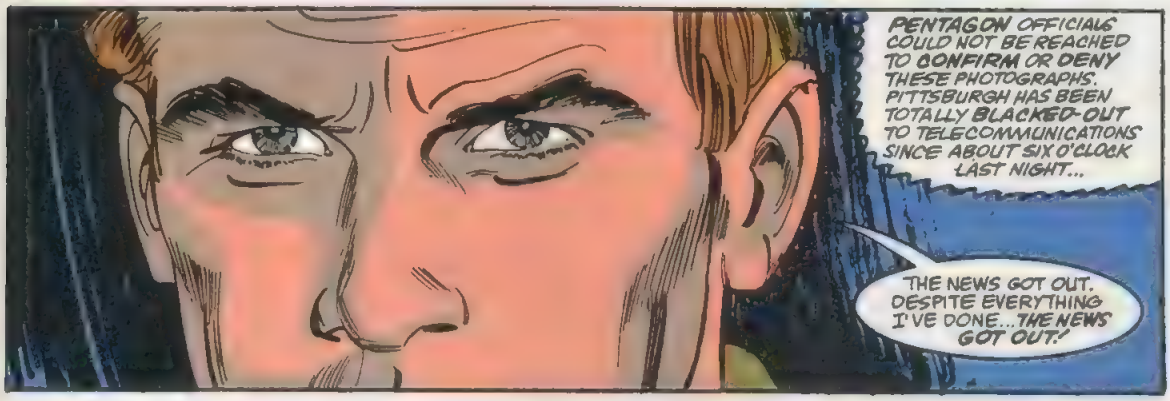
AND BY THE *POWER* THAT MAKES ME WHAT I AM, I *KNOW* WHAT I'M GOING TO DO. I AM GOING TO *FIND* THE TALL BLOND MAN AND MAKE CERTAIN HE'S *DEAD*.

AND IF HE'S *NOT*, I WILL NOT REST UNTIL I FIND A WAY TO MAKE HIM *PAY*. PITTSBURGH-- YOU *SHALL BE AVENGED!*





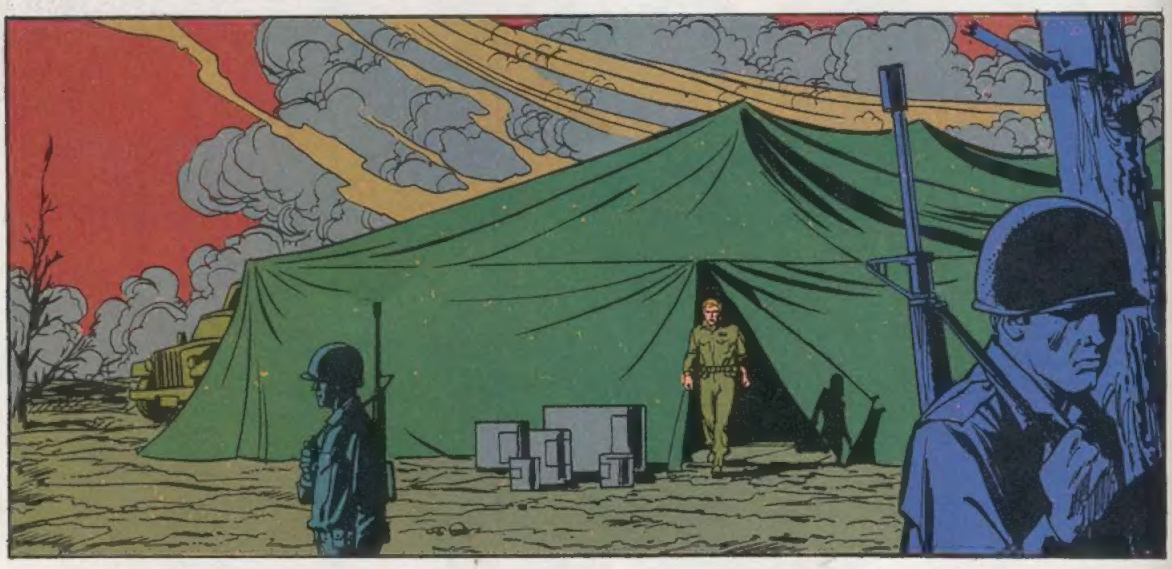

--VIET AUTHORITIES HAVE JUST TRANSMITTED INFRARED PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE EASTERN UNITED STATES TAKEN BY SOVIET "WEATHER SATELLITES" WHICH SHOW THE AREA AROUND PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA TO HAVE BEEN TOTALLY LEVELLED...

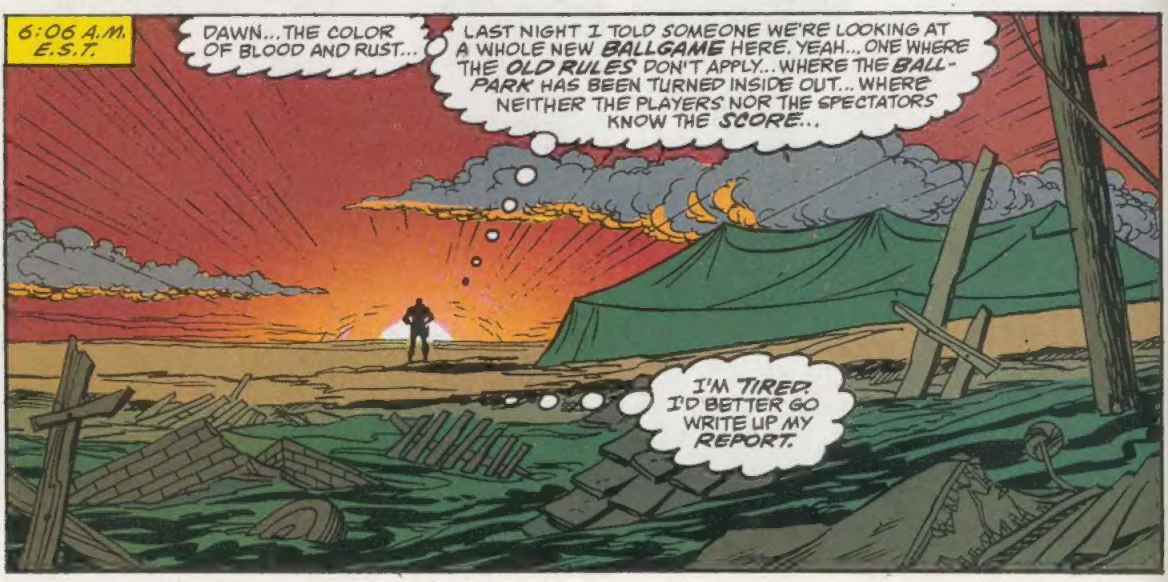

PENTAGON OFFICIALS COULD NOT BE REACHED TO CONFIRM OR DENY THESE PHOTOGRAPHS. PITTSBURGH HAS BEEN TOTALLY BLACKED-OUT TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS SINCE ABOUT SIX O'CLOCK LAST NIGHT...
THE NEWS GOT OUT. DESPITE EVERYTHING I'VE DONE...THE NEWS GOT OUT!

THAT CIVILIAN COPTER I HAD SHOT DOWN... THERE WAS NO NEED.
LOUSY RUSSIANS! PROBABLY WANTED TO BE THE FIRST TO SPREAD THE WORD SO THEY WOULDN'T GET BLAMED...
YOU HAVE? I'LL TELL HIM!

COLONEL, SKYWISE HAS GOT SPITFIRE IN HER SIGHTS! THEY WANT TO KNOW IF THEY SHOULD OPEN FIRE.

NO.
TELL SKYWISE TO HOLD FIRE.
ENOUGH DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE FOR ONE DAY.




6:06 A.M. E.S.T.
DAWN... THE COLOR OF BLOOD AND RUST...
LAST NIGHT I TOLD SOMEONE WE'RE LOOKING AT A WHOLE NEW BALLGAME HERE. YEAH... ONE WHERE THE OLD RULES DON'T APPLY... WHERE THE BALL-PARK HAS BEEN TURNED INSIDE OUT... WHERE NEITHER THE PLAYERS NOR THE SPECTATORS KNOW THE SCORE...
I'M TIRED. I'D BETTER GO WRITE UP MY REPORT.

'Twas three days before Christmas and all though the town, not a creature was stirring, because they were all *dead.*

(No, too *flippant.* Let's start again.)

My name is *MacIntyre Browning* and I'm a bird colonel in the Army's Defense Intelligence Agency. I've seen a lot of disturbing things in my day — in Southeast Asia, in Grenada, in El Salvador. But what I saw in Pittsburgh last night blows everything else away.

(Too *matter-of-fact.* This is what I get for trying to express myself after going without sleep for two days. One more time.)

Yesterday the world as we knew it came to an end. It didn't end with a bang exactly, nor did it end with a whimper. But it ended with at least one million people dead or dying. With a hundred towns and villages destroyed. With the earth bleeding from a mortal wound.

God only knows how or why it happened. The *"Pittsburgh Effect,"* like the so-called *"White Event"* a year and a half ago, are phenomena without precedent, beyond the realm of *known science.* Someone suggested that the so-called "super hero" who turned up in Pittsburgh may have had something to do with this. I'm betting we're *never* going to know.

(I've got it. I'm on a roll now.)

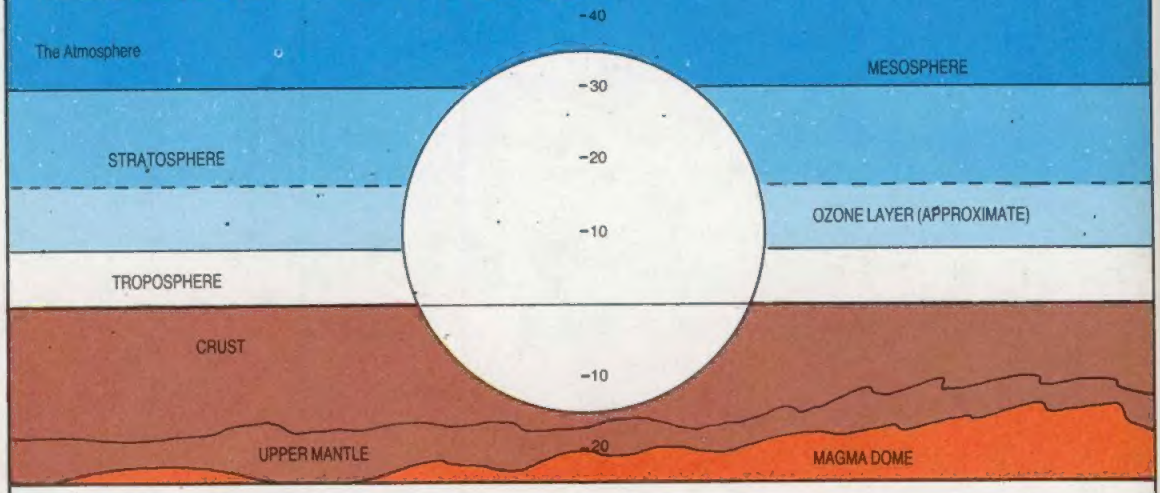
Pittsburgh is *gone.* Completely. This fact must be understood *absolutely.* The city was within a sphere of earth and atmosphere measuring fifty miles in diameter which was completely converted into the strange, inert material now at the bottom of the crater — the *Pitt,* as I've heard it ghoulishly referred to. Our chances of analyzing a pure sample of this material were destroyed by the storms and influx of debris that followed the Effect. Not to mention the waters of the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers which are pouring over the rim, creating the world's most spectacular water falls and adding to the substance at the bottom.

So the world ended yesterday when Pittsburgh did. Not with a bang, not with a whimper, but with one million unanswered questions. We are left with ruptured *tectonic plates,* a hotbed of *volcanic activity,* and a *hole* in the ozone layer so big I'm going to make out a check to skin cancer research the first chance I get. We're left with a planet that's a whole different place from what it was when we all went to sleep in our safe, snug beds two nights ago.

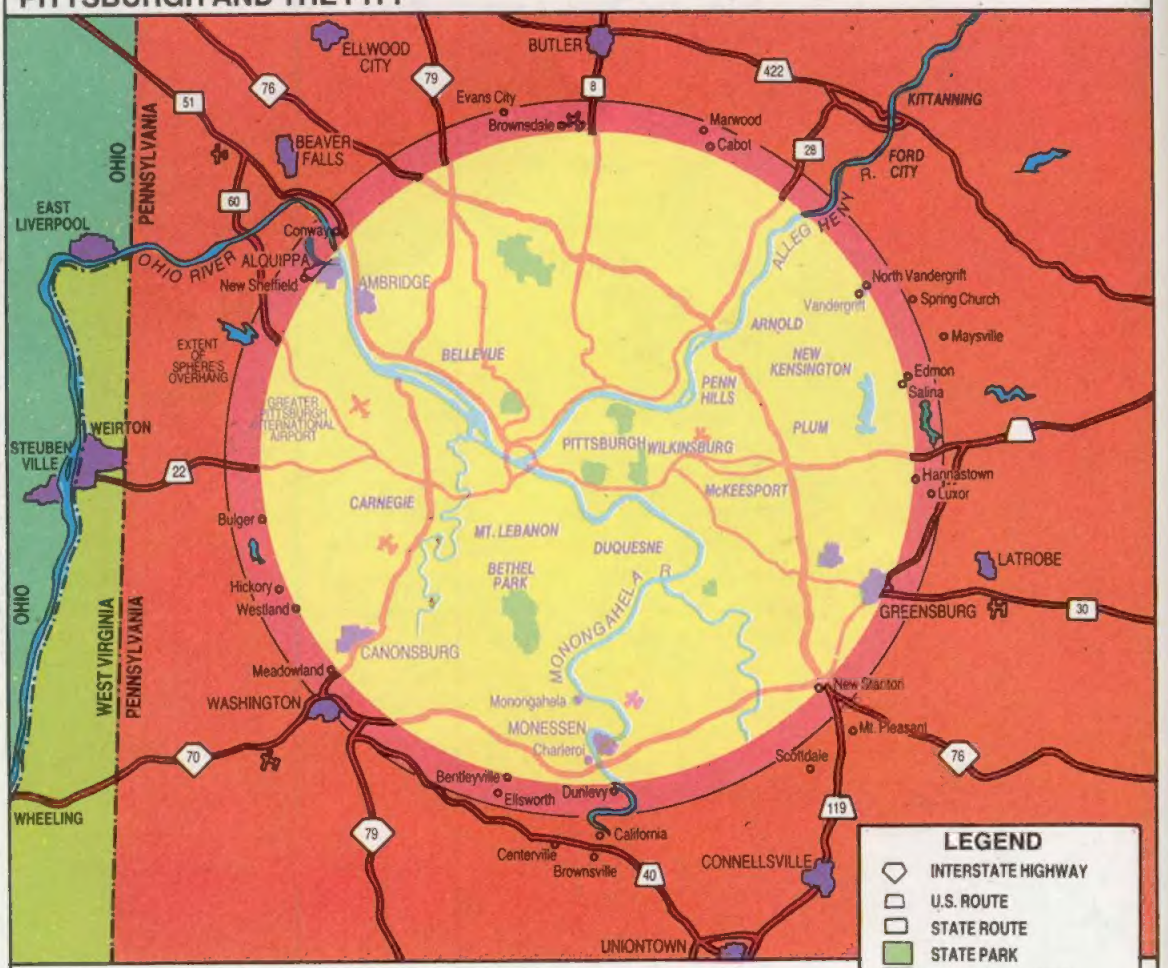
Merry Christmas, world.

THE PITT

The Extent of the Eradication of the Pittsburgh Region



PITTSBURGH AND THE PITT



Volume of Sphere: 65,313 cubic miles
Area of land eradicated at ground level: 1,590 square miles
Volume of earth eradicated: 14,888 cubic miles
Population of Greater Pittsburgh Region: 430,000

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